



# **The impact of a diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law.**

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Thesis submitted for the degree Doctor in Social Work at North-  
West University

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## DECLARATION

I, Tshepiso Sinah Motshedi, declare herewith that the dissertation *titled*

*The impact of a diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law in the North West Province*, which I submit to North-West University, is in compliance/partial compliance with the requirements of the degree Doctor in Social Work. It is my own work, in accordance with the requirements of language editing, that all sources used or cited are indicated and acknowledged by means of full references, and that it has not already been submitted to another university.

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## DEDICATION

This research project would not have been possible without the tangible support of a number of people who directly or indirectly participated in the completion of this hard work. My sincere thanks and gratitude are extended to the following people who made this study and my future possible:

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## **PREFACE**

This thesis complies with the requirements in accordance with Regulation A.7.2.3 for PhD in social work. It was prepared for submission in article format in accordance with the 2018 version of the General Academic Rules (A4.1.1.1.4 and A4.4.2.9) of North-West University.

For the purpose of clarity, the instructions to authors for the journal *Children and Youth Services Review*, are included to give an indication of the Journal article requirements that will be followed in applying the article format of this study. It is planned to submit all three articles to this Journal.

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## SUMMARY

### TITLE: THE IMPACT OF A DIVERSION PROGRAMME ON THE PRO-CRIMINAL ATTITUDES OF YOUTH IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW.

Criminologists and social work researcher, amongst other social service professions, have for a long period been interested in developing effective interventions for youth in conflict with the law. Called diversion programmes, these interventions are designed to make a difference in a child's life by diverting them away from a life in prison, where they learn criminal skills due to their exposure to criminal adults. Diversion programmes for youth in conflict with the law and youth offenders have been implemented in South Africa since the early 1990s. A system has been developed whereby youth are referred by the courts to attend diversion programmes rendered by Department of Social Department and service providers such as NICRO and Khulisa. Governed by the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008), youth offenders are referred, and managed by Social Workers and probation officers of the Department of Social Development. It also stipulates the options and levels of diversion interventions.

A further aspect of research interest is the notion of recidivism, or the risk of re-offending that may set a first-time youth offender onto a career path of re-offending. A question frequently asked is: *What can be done to prevent a child from re-offending?* This has been the topic of many research projects and focuses. A concept that has drawn significant international research is that of pro-criminal attitudes; attitudes that result from the development of certain thought patterns that are conducive to and underlie offending behaviour. By identifying criminal thought patterns in youth that can be termed "pro-criminal", researcher and practitioners are able to design their programmes in such a way that these pro-criminal thoughts are reduced, improving the chances that the individual will refrain from re-offending. In this way it has been found that cognitive-behavioural interventions such as life skills programmes are most effective in reducing pro-criminal thinking patterns and appear to help with reducing tendencies to re-offend.

This study is focused on evaluating the impact of a life skills diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law. The *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme was developed by the department of Social Development and has been implemented nationally at regional offices where youth offenders are diverted to programmes such as the *Rhythm of Life*. The central question posed in this study is whether this programme is effective in reducing the criminal thinking styles of youth participating in the programme. The study utilised a quasi-experimental design to examine the research question, using as experimental group, and three groups of youth from a rural area in North West province, as the participants in this programme. Representing the comparison group was a similar group of youth that participated in a *Victim*

*Offender Mediation* programme. This intervention differed from the skills-training programme in that it did not consist of any training sessions, but only mediation sessions involving offenders and victims. Youth with confirmed offences were included as the experimental group and youth at risk with un-confirmed offending behaviour as the comparison group in the research study. The comparison group and experimental group comprised both male and female offenders between ages 14 and 17 years. In order to ensure optimal presentation of the experimental intervention, the researcher worked with presenters and facilitators in the Rhythm programme, preparing them for the intervention, and extensively refining the content of the intervention and its presentation format. This was done by means of interviews and focus groups with Probation officers, Crime Prevention Coordinators and Generic Social Workers to further explore their understanding of the *Rhythm of Life* programme and training manual.

Youth participants were recruited at three service points and came from youth clients engaged in the Rhythm programme for an eight-week period consisting of weekly group-work sessions. They signed the consent forms along with their parents. These forms were translated in Setswana – their home language. Group sessions were held at the service point's office and schools where the participants were invited to attend the sessions. Participants received appointment cards that indicated the date and time of the follow-up appointment and they were also reminded of their attendance one week prior to the data collection session. A Pre-test was completed before commencement of the programme, as well as at the end of the eight weeks as a post-test, and once again three months after completion of the study. Three instruments were used: the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles PICTS; Service Perceptions Index (SPI); and Peer Deviancy Scale (PDS).

All instruments were compiled in a battery that contained biographical data variables. Questionnaires were made up of the three mentioned scales for the pre- and post-test. The quantitative questionnaire was presented in English and was not translated into any other language seeing that youth participants were able to answer them appropriately. The interview question was open-ended and explored perceptions concerning the benefits of the "*Rhythm of Life*" programme for each individual participant. After three months of completion, the youth participants attended a single in-depth qualitative interview with each youth participant of the *Rhythm of Life and Victim Offender Mediation for a follow-up interview. The qualitative interview was recorded by the researcher. However, after three months, including the focus group recordings, the recordings were translated and transcribed by hired transcription services. The data for quantitative research were analysed by Prof Suria Ellis from NWU Statistical Consultation Services, the researcher, and her supervisor who is knowledgeable about analysing statistics.*

The three articles presented in this manuscript represent findings from three different focus areas in this study. The first concerns refinement efforts made to the programme in order to prepare the Rhythm programme for implementation as key independent variable. The researcher aimed at ensuring that the programme remained consistent during implementation across different presenters; also that it was optimized for presentation. The second article concerns the quantitative findings with regard to the experimental study involving an experimental and a comparison group involving two groups of youth in conflict with the law, allocated to either the *Rhythm of Life* or *Victim Offender Mediation* diversion programme. The findings of this quasi-experimental study indicated various differences with regard to criminal attitudes and thinking styles – objectives frequently associated with life skills-oriented diversion programme outcomes. The third and final article is concerned with qualitative perceptions of the same groups that participated in the experiment regarding their main gains from the programme three months after completion of the programme. This study found, amongst others, that life-style changes seemed easier for participants that had completed the life skills programme.

A last section of the dissertation is allocated to conclusions and recommendations with respect to the objectives of this study, and finally the implications of this study for future presentation of the *Rhythm of Life* programme.

**Key terms:** Impact, Diversion programme, Pro-Criminal Attitudes (PCA), youth, in conflict with the law

## OPSOMMING

### TITEL: DIE IMPAK VAN 'N WEGLEIDINGSPROGRAM OP DIE PRO-KRIMINELE INGESTELDHEID VAN DIE JEUG WAT IN BOTSING MET DIE GEREK VERKEER

Kriminoloë en navorsers op die gebied van maatskaplike werk en ander beroepe in maatskaplike werk is geruime tyd reeds daarin geïnteresseerd om effektiewe intervensies vir kinders wat in botsing met die gereg verkeer, te ontwikkel. Hierdie intervensies, genaamd wegleidingsprogramme, is ontwerp om 'n verskil te maak in kinders se lewens deur hulle weeg te lei van 'n lewe in die gevangenis, waar hulle kriminele vaardighede aanleer weens hul blootstelling aan kriminele volwassenes. Wegleidingsprogramme vir kinders wat in botsing met die gereg verkeer, is reeds sedert die vroeë 1990's in Suid-Afrika geïmplementeer. 'n Stelsel is ontwikkel deur middel waarvan kinders deur die houe verwys word om wegleidingsprogramme by te woon wat deur die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling en diensverskaffers soos NICRO en Khulisa aangebied word. Soos deur die *Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008)* bepaal, word jeugdige oortreders deur maatskaplike werkers en proefbeamptes van die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling verwys. Dit bepaal ook die opsies en vlakke van wegleiding-intervensies.

'n Bykomende belangrike navorsingsaspek is die begrip *terugvalling*, of die risiko van her-oortreding, wat 'n eerste-keer jeugdige oortreder op 'n loopbaanpad van her-oortreding kan plaas. 'n Vraag wat dikwels gestel word, is: *Wat kan gedoen word om te voorkom dat 'n kind weer oortree?* Dit was al die onderwerp van talle navorsingsprojekte en -fokusse. 'n Konsep wat noemenswaardige internasionale navorsing ontlok het, is dié van pro-kriminele ingesteldhede; ingesteldhede wat voortvloei uit die ontwikkeling van bepaalde denkpatrone wat bydra tot en onderliggend is aan oortredingsgedrag. Deur kriminele denkpatrone by jeugdiges, wat "pro-krimineel" genoem kan word, te identifiseer kan navorsers en praktisyns in staat stel om hul sodanig te ontwerp dat hierdie pro-kriminele denke beperk kan word, wat die kans dat die in-gedrag-intervensies soos lewensvaardighede-programme die effektiëste metode is om pro-kriminele denkpatrone te beperk, en dit blyk dat dit ook help om die neigings om weer te oortree, te beperk.

Hierdie studie fokus daarop om die impak van 'n lewensvaardighede wegleidingsprogram op die pro-kriminele ingesteldhede van die jeug wat in botsing met die gereg verkeer, te evalueer. Die *Rhythm of Life*-wedgeidingsprogram is deur die Departement van Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling ontwerp en is landswyd by streekkantore geïmplementeer waar jeugdige oortreders na programme soos die *Rhythm of Life*-program verwys word. Die kernvraag wat in hierdie studie gestel word, is of die program die kriminele denk-style van die jeugdiges wat aan hierdie program

deelneem, beperk. Die studie het van 'n kwasi-eksperimentele ontwerp gebruik gemaak om die navorsingsvraag te ondersoek deur drie groepe jeugdige uit 'n plattelandse gebied in die Noordwes-provinsie as die deelnemers in hierdie program te selekteer, wat dan ook die eksperimentele groep verteenwoordig het. 'n Soortgelyke groep jeugdige wat in 'n "Slagoffer-Oortreder Mediëringsprogram" deelgeneem het, het die vergelykingsgroep verteenwoordig. Hierdie intervensie het van die vaardigheidsopleiding-program verskil deurdat dit nie uit enige opleidingsessies bestaan het nie; slegs mediëring wat oortreders en slagoffers betrek het. Jeugdige met bevestigde oortredings is as die eksperimentele groep by die navorsingstudie ingesluit, met risiko-kindere met nie-bevestigde oortredings as die vergelykingsgroep. Die vergelykingsgroep en die eksperimentele groep het uit beide manlike en vroulike oortreders tussen die ouderdomme 14 en 17 jaar bestaan. Om optimale verteenwoordiging van die eksperimentele intervensie te verseker het die navorser met aanbieders en fasiliteerders in die *Rhythm of Life*-program gewerk om hulle vir die intervensie voor te berei en die inhoud van die intervensie en die aanbiedingsformaat omvattend te verfyn. Dit is gedoen deur middel van onderhoude en fokusgroepe met proefbeamptes, misdaadvoorkomingskoördineerders en generiese maatskaplike werkers om hul begrip van die *Rhythm of Life* - program en opleidingshandleiding te bepaal.

Jeugdeelnemers is gewerf by drie dienspunte waar hulle betrokke was by die *Rhythm of Life*-program wat agt weke duur en uit weeklikse groepwerk-sessies bestaan. Hulle het die instemmingsvorme saam met hul ouers onderteken. Hierdie vorme is in Setswana – hul huistaal – vertaal. Groepsessies is by die kantore van die dienspunte gehou, asook by die skole waarheen die deelnemers genooi was om die sessies by te woon. Deelnemers het afspraak-kaartjies ontvang wat die datum en tyd van die opvolg-afspraak aangedui het, en hulle is een week voor die data-insamelingssessie daaraan herinner. 'n Voor-toets is voor die aanvang van die program afgeneem, asook aan die einde van die agt weke as 'n na-toets, en weereens drie maande na afhandeling van die studie. Drie instrumente is gebruik: die *Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (ICTS)*; die *Service Perceptions Index (SPI)*; en die *Peer Deviancy Scale*.

Alle instrumente is in 'n battery saamgestel wat biografiese dataveranderlikes bevat het. Vir die voor- en natoetsvraelyste is die vraelyste uit die drie genoemde skale saamgestel. Die kwantitatiewe vraelys is in Engels aangebied en is nie in enige ander taal vertaal nie, aangesien die jeugdeelnemers dit toepaslik kon beantwoord. Die onderhoudvraag was oop-einde van aard en het persepsies rakende die voordele van die *Rhythm of Life*-program vir elke individuele deelnemer bepaal. Na drie maande van voltooiing is 'n enkele kwalitatiewe, in-diepte-opvolgonderhoud met elkeen van die jeugdeelnemers aan die *Rhythm of Life*-program en die *Slagoffer-Oortreder* Mediëring gevoer. Die navorser het die kwalitatiewe onderhoud op band

vasgelê. Na drie maande is hierdie opnames, insluitend die fokusgroep-opnames, egter deur gehuurde transkribeerdienste getranskribeer en vertaal. Die data vir die kwantitatiewe navorsing is geanaliseer deur prof. Suria Ellis van Statistiese Konsultasiedienste van die NWU, die navorser self en haar studieleier, wat 'n kenner is op die gebied van statistiek-analise.

Die drie artikels wat in hierdie manuskrip aangebied word, verteenwoordig bevindinge uit drie verskillende fokusareas in hierdie studie. Die het betrekking op die verfyning van die program met die doel om die *Rhythm of Life*-program vir implementering voor te berei as die hoof-onafhanklike veranderlike. Die navorsers was daarop ingestel om seker te maak dat die program konstant bly tydens die implementering daarvan deur verskillende aanbieders; ook dat dit vir aanbieder geoptimaliseer was. Die tweede artikel het betrekking op die kwantitatiewe of Slagoffer-Oortreder Mediëringsprogram. Die bevindinge ten opsigte van hierdie kwasi-eksperimentele studie het verskeie verskille met betrekking tot kriminele ingesteldhede en denk-style aangedui – doelwitte wat dikwels menigmaal met lewensvaardighede-georiënteerde programuitkomst geassosieer word. Die derde en finale artikel het betrekking op kwalitatiewe persepsies van dieselfde groepe wat aan die eksperiment rakende hulle belangrikste winste uit die program drie maande na voltooiing van die program. Onder andere het hierdie studie bevind dat vir deelnemers wat die lewensvaardighede-program voltooi het, veranderinge in lewenstyl makliker gevind het.

'n Laaste afdeling van die tesis dek die gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings ten opsigte van die doelstellings van hierdie studie, en ten slotte die implikasies van hierdie studie vir toekomstige aanbiedings van die *Rhythm of Life*-program.

**Sleuteltermes:** Impak, "Diversion"-program, Pro-Kriminele Ingesteldhede (PKI), jeug, in botsing met die gereg

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

PICTS	Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Style
Cf-r	revised Confusion
Df-r	revised Defensiveness
Mo	Mollification
Co	Cut-off
En	Entitlement scale
Po	Power Orientation scale
P	Proactive Criminal Thinking scale
Sn	Sentimentality scale
So	Super-optimism scale
Ci	Cognitive Indolence scale
Ds	Discontinuity scale
PRB	Problem Avoidance scale
PEER	Peer deviancy scale
R	Reactive Criminal Thinking scale
INF	Infrequency scale
DNH	Denial of Harm scale
CI	Cognitive Indolence
HOS	Hostility
CUR	Current Criminal Thinking Scale
FOC	Fear-of-Change scale

HIS	Historical Criminal Thinking Scale
AST	Self-assertion/Deception factor scale
SPI	Service Perceptions Index
GCT	General Criminal Thinking Scale
MMPI	Minnesota Multiphasic Personality -Inventory
PCA	Pro-Criminal Attitudes
RJ	Restorative Justice
VOM	<i>Victim Offender Mediation</i>
ROL	<i>Rhythm of Life</i> programme
FGC	Family Group Conference
ANCOVA	Analysis of covariance
CJA	Child Justice Act
CYSR	Children and Youth Services Review
DSD	Department of Social Development
NICRO	National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
CYCC	Child and Youth Care Center
RSA	Republic of South Africa

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Impact**

Impact is a technical term with a specific definition that requires comparison with a counterfactual: that is, determining what would have happened in the absence of the programme (White, 2010).

### **Diversion programme**

Diversion: “Diversion is the process by which a child who has been charged with having committed a criminal offence(s) is diverted from the formal criminal justice system in lieu of prosecution, into programmes that are more restorative by nature and that hold the child accountable for his/her actions” (Department of Social Development, 2007). Mackin, Juliette, Lisa, Lucas, Callie, Lambarth, Herrera, Wallter, Shannon, Carey, and Finigan (2010), further defined Diversion programmes as programmes that are intended to hold juveniles accountable for their behaviour and attitudes without formal court involvement.

### **Pro-Criminal Attitudes (PCA)**

Pro-Criminal Attitudes (PCA): refers to the “...specific attitude, value, belief, rationalization and techniques of neutralization that imply criminal conduct is acceptable” (Andrews & Bonta, 2010, p. 352).

### **Youth**

South Africa’s National Youth Commission Act, 1996, defines youth as those between 14 and 35 years of age.

### **Youth/Child in conflict with the law**

According to the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008: Amended National Policy Framework (2018) youth/children in conflict with the law refers to any person younger than 18 years who comes into contact with the criminal justice system as a result of being suspected of committing an offence.

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# **SECTION A: RESEARCH ORIENTATION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Section A focuses on the research orientation of evaluating the impact of a diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law. It outlines how the research will progress during the research implementation. Based on the information and background, the researcher realized the need for evaluating the diversion programme in the North West Province. The subsequent section presents an overview and contextualization of diversion programmes, followed by a discussion of relevant theoretical and empirical developments.

## **1.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION**

The democratization of South Africa in 1994 necessitated important changes to, among others, the country's legal and criminal justice landscapes (Constitution No. 108 of 1996). Prior to 1994, offending children were often subjected to the harsh realities of formal prosecution, incarcerated in adult prison institutions, and frequently subjected to corporal punishment. The Constitution (No. 108 of 1996) Section 28(2) considers these practices as contravening the best interests of the child; therefore, the criminal justice system needed procedures for more humane and age-appropriate treatment of children in conflict with the law. One such measure is diversion, which is the channelling of child offenders, in appropriate cases, away from formal justice procedures, although there is sufficient evidence to prosecute them (Davis & Busby, 2006:102; Gallinetti et al. 2004:32). The diversion strategy aims to strengthen responsibility in child offenders by holding them accountable for their actions, and by reinforcing respect for the rights and fundamental freedom of others (Matshego, 2001: 4).

Restorative justice, diversion, prevention, and early intervention programmes informed criminal justice thinking since the inception of the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) was adopted in 1998. This implies a paradigm shift away from a retributive system focused on punishment, towards a restorative justice approach, which promotes accountability and reconciliation. Both the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (Branken & Batley, 1998) and the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, 1997) emphasized restorative justice as this approach seeks to channel young offenders away from the criminal justice system and provide youth an opportunity of being accountable for unlawful behaviour and to encourage them to make amends to victims, rather than having them being incarcerated.

According to the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 'Diversion' means diversion of a matter involving a child away from the formal court procedures in a criminal matter by means of the procedures

established by Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 of the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008. The belief is that the deeper offenders go into the system, the more difficult it is to treat them successfully and the more likely it will be that they will fall into the criminal abyss. The trend is to maintain control of the youth by using diversion and presenting special needs community-based treatment programmes. Diversion is conducted post-arrest and involves attendance of a structured programme with the intention of changing behaviour and reducing risk of re-offending. The success of these programmes depends on how the probation process (the combined social and justice intervention process) is administered and whether the goals of the programme meet and match the needs of the offenders and the state.

Diversion has been practised in South Africa since the early 1990s, albeit in a selective and disjointed manner due to the absence of formal legislation. Since then, the type and scope of programmes expanded considerably amid the burgeoning of referrals for diversion (Steyn, 2010). The promulgation of the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) is seen as a milestone in South Africa's response to children in conflict with the law. The Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) was introduced on 1 April 2010 following a lengthy process of development and consultation. It contains, amongst others, directives for diversion of child offenders.

According to Section 51 of the Child Justice Act, the objectives of diversion are: to deal with a child outside the formal criminal justice system in appropriate cases; encourage accountability in child offenders and meet their individual needs; reintegrate and reconcile the child with their families and community; provide the opportunity for victims to express their views and the impact on them; encourage the rendering of some symbolic benefit or some object as compensation for the harm; promote reconciliation between the child and the person or community affected by the harm; prevent stigmatization following contact with the criminal justice system; and avoid diverted children from receiving a criminal record. The options for diversion amount to supervision and guidance orders, instructions for appropriate behaviour, attendance of counselling or therapy, restitution to those affected by the offence, and community service.

Most diversion options include a life skills orientation set out to impart pro-social skills such as decision-making, communication and conflict resolution skills to groups of youth in conflict with the law, all within a structured context (Steyn, 2010). Unpaid pre-trial community service at the clinics and police stations often runs concurrent with life skills training as a retributive mechanism to repair damages. Some programmes have an outdoor focus and include recreational activities to strengthen self-esteem and group interaction. Programmes vary in duration, require either institutionalization for a period or are community based, allowing the child to stay at home whilst attending the programme during afternoons.

Although many national and international evaluative studies have been performed on diversion programmes, a limited number of sources could be found dealing with impact evaluation of such programmes (Hodges, Martin, Smith & Cooper, 2011). Locally, Roestenburg and Oliphant (2008) began an evaluative study measuring the perceptions of youth regarding those diversion programmes they had attended. Although not regarded as a comprehensive evaluation, their report tested measures and gained insights regarding factors associated with diversion programme impacts and post-programme behaviour of youth. Few local evaluative studies on diversion programmes (see next section) could be found and this may indicate a need for measurement of the impact of youth diversion programmes.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As indicated, many international diversion programme evaluation studies exist, which yield mixed results. Several studies evaluated and confirmed programme positive impact (Van der Kooi, 2015; Greenwood, Model, Hydell & Chiesa, 1998) on behaviour and reduction of pro-criminal attitudes. Local studies evaluated programme effects on recidivism in the twelve-month post-intervention period (Berg, 2012 & Jules-Maquet, 2013). Findings from these studies varied – recidivism of 7% post-intervention was recorded; longer-term programmes were found to be more effective; attachment to community support structures such as churches and schools and the family appeared to have a more positive impact on the performance of youth in diversion programmes than did those with weak ties (Roestenburg & Oliphant, 2008). A third group of studies examined the delivery mode of programmes, whether structured “*manual*” programmes were better than therapeutically focused programmes (Stainbrook, Penney & Elwyn, 2015), or the impact of contextual factors such as institutionalization versus “out-patient” programme modes (Day et al., 2013). Generally, the conclusion drawn is that not enough has been done to evaluate diversion programmes. The methods used in most of these studies involved consumer surveys and other programme metrics analysis, but none of the local studies used pre- and post-programme impact measurement or any measurement of attitudes.

It is concluded that a need exists for evaluation studies on diversion programmes, specifically concerning their immediate impact on behavioural change and attitude towards offending and crime in general. Life-skills achievement appears to be an important aspect of evaluation. Recidivism remains an important indicator of programme effectiveness, but most local evidence in this regard remains sketchy and vague as indicated in the above-mentioned examples. This is the research problem for this intended study, and a study focusing on diversion programme effectiveness is regarded necessary to determine whether (a) an existing, purpose designed youth diversion programme is able to reduce pro-criminal attitudes in youth participants, (b) whether potential links exist between immediate impacts in terms of PCA and longer-term (twelve-

month post-intervention) recidivism. Such a study could contribute to the knowledgebase on diversion programme effectiveness measurement. A suitable diversion programme, the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme regularly presented by the Department of Social Development in the North West Province was selected as programme example in this study. The findings from this research contributed to programme evaluation in social work, and the research aims at informing providers, organizations and government departments involved in child justice concerning the effectiveness of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme.

Extensive international literature focuses on the role of *Pro-Criminal Attitudes* (PCA) in youth criminal behaviour, programme outcomes and recidivism (Day, Kozar & Davey, 2013; Gydish, Werdegar, Sorensen, Clark, Acampora, 1998). The focus on pro-criminal attitudes is regarded as impacting the effectiveness of programmes. The more recent literature specifically argues that combined adult-education and client-centred, therapeutic approaches to offender rehabilitation programmes appear to be the most effective intervention options for reducing pro-criminal attitudes and behaviour in offenders. Accordingly, PCAs are considered to be a dynamic risk factor that can be reduced or eradicated by dedicated modules in offender treatment programs. It is vital to include PCA because it assists in assessing the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs of the youth participants regarding criminal activities. The PCA will be discussed in more detail later in the document.

### **1.3.1 Research questions**

The following research questions are formulated from the problem statement:

- What is the theoretical framework underpinning the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme in the North West Province and to what extent does this theoretical underpinning contribute towards change in pro-criminal attitudes?
- What is the direct impact of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on the PCA of participating youth?
- What is the medium-term (three-month post-intervention) impact of the *Rhythm of Life* programme seen from the perspective of youth participating in the programme?
- What methodological and programme recommendations can be made to the diversion sector (DSD) by this evaluation study?

### **1.3.2 Contribution of the study**

This study is considered necessary in view of the lack of evaluative studies on diversion programmes (*Rhythm of Life*) in South Africa. Little is known about the methods used in *Rhythm of Life* diversion programmes, and whether such programmes reduce or influence the pro-criminal attitudes, and knowledge is lacking with regard to what mechanisms contribute to attitudinal and eventually behavioural change in participants. This study contributes to the knowledge expansion in the diversion sector of South Africa.

## **1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 General Aim**

The overarching aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law.

#### **1.4.1.1 Objectives**

In order to achieve the aim of the research, the objectives are as follows:

- To evaluate and verify the adequacy of the content of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme as a valid intervention for the reduction of PCA in youth.
- To evaluate the short-term impact of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on PCA by means of an empirical quasi experimental study performed on a group of youth in conflict with the law, taken from programme delivery sites in the North West Province.
- To explore the perceptions of youth participants in the *Rhythm of Life* programme regarding the impact of this programme on PCA and the diversion process on them as participants within the first three-month post-intervention period.
- To formulate recommendations to the North West Department of Social Development with regard to the results of the three studies and the above-mentioned diversion programme for youth in conflict with the law.

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this research a combined qualitative and quantitative or multi-method research approach was followed (Williams, Unrau & Grinnell, 2005). The approach is chosen due to the sequence of different quantitative and qualitative phases being proposed for this study. Although the

completion of one phase feeds into the next phase, the method is not identified as sequential, because some of the phases are distinctly separate from others.

This study is considered a partial and not full evaluation as it does not focus on the multiple issues commonly associated with large-scale evaluation studies, but identifies specific elements for evaluation purposes (Schwalbe, Gearing, Mackenzie, Brewer & Ibrahim, 2012). The study does not feature medium- to longer-term outcome evaluation as proposed by Grinnell, Gabor & Unrau (2012), nor does it aim to evaluate the process, although some process elements are evaluated by means of the service perceptions study and the manual evaluation. The study is limited to evaluating programme content (Article 1), short-term or immediate programme impact (Article 2) and medium-term perceived impact (Article 3). In accordance with the three articles required of PhD candidates, the study consists of three phases which are phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3. Phase 1 is qualitative by nature and uses a focus group of presenters to evaluate programme content against certain pre-defined criteria, and also a literature review. Phase 2 is of a quantitative nature and involves impact evaluation of the *Rhythm of Life* programme on a group of youth in conflict with the law, before and after they had been exposed to the programme. Phase 3 consists of qualitative individual in-depth interviews with each member of the experimental and comparison group at month three of the twelve-month post-intervention period. The three phases of the study are presented below:

### **1.5.1 Phase 1**

**Phase 1** consisted of two research activities. Activity one was a literature study, a state-of-the-art analysis to determine likely theoretical components of similar programmes internationally. The underlying logic model of the current programme was also critically examined, looking at what change is promoted and how this change was facilitated by the programme (Grinnell, et al. 2012, p.71). This enabled to evaluate whether the current programme fits international trends for similar programmes. Two focus groups were implemented to evaluate the extent to which the current programme meets the international and local needs as per criteria generated from literature. For critical analysis, the researcher followed the guidelines for critical reviews by Bryman (2016), those by Mongan-Rallis, (2014) and Jesson and Lacey (2006) outlining steps in critical analysis of obtained literature. As a precursor to systematic reviews, critical reviews mandate researchers to set narrow search criteria in accordance with the research question, and to follow a critical analysis approach of compare and contrast to evaluate obtained articles. In this study the researcher identified as inclusion criterion, only articles, texts and reports of similar programmes that have been implemented and tested in other contexts, locally and internationally. By critically questioning this evidence and comparing and contrasting common elements in these programmes that show effectiveness, the researcher was able to build a framework of best

practices that can be compared with elements of the *Rhythm of Life* programme. Based on this qualitative, critical comparison the researcher was able to refine the current programme and enhance its features. More information on this phase is provided under point 3 on page 5 and was not repeated here. The literature study is presented in the thesis as Section B, Article 1.

Activity 2 under phase 1 consisted of focus groups with programme presenters as participants. These focus groups were used as feedback mechanism to enrich content in the current programme, critically review its change logic and adjust the programme, should it be necessary. Pertinent suggestions for content enrichment were the primary output for this objective. On the strength of a combination of the critical review results and the qualitative content evaluation by the focus groups, some improvements were made to the programme contents and were implemented for experimental testing in this study. If changes were found concerning the delivery mechanism or sequence issues, such changes were incorporated in the refined version although this was not formally expected in this phase. The findings of Phase 1 were utilized to adjust the programme manual in preparation for re-training of facilitators in the programme. The adjusted manual was disseminated to the Director of DSD in the North West Province as recommendation output of this phase.

### **1.5.2 Population for the focus groups**

Participants for the focus groups were recruited from presenters of the programme who had a direct interest in the programme and its composition and presentation and acted as key informants in this project. All programme facilitators of the *Rhythm of Life* Programme in the North West Province served as the population. They were in the employ of North West DSD in the North West Province. The permission was obtained from DSD in the North West Province and did not need separate goodwill from this organization.

#### **1.5.2.1 Sampling**

The sample consisted of eight facilitators of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme in the North West Province from three different selected service points, namely Tswaing Service Point, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa. All the participants are employed with the Department of Social Development in the North West Province and are qualified social workers with more than two years, and five years of experience as crime prevention coordinator. The sample selected for the two focus groups were drawn from the fifty-six facilitators in the North West Province: Probation Officers, Crime Prevention Coordinators and generic social workers on the strength of an invite that requested voluntary participation. Two focus group sessions were conducted to compare findings; each group comprised a minimum of two probation officers, one crime prevention officer and two generic social workers. Thus each focus group was made up of six members. Should

more participants have opted to be in the research, they were allowed until a maximum of 12 members per focus group had been reached, but this did not happen. This composition promoted heterogeneity in the participants but ensured that the groups represented knowledgeable participants (Babbie, 2014; Botma et al., 2010, Grinnell & Unrau, 2008; Monette et al., 2011).

#### **1.5.2.2 Inclusion criteria for the focus groups**

- Participants were employed by DSD. The institution was presenting the programme at the time.
- The participants were probation officers, crime prevention coordinators or generic social workers who implemented the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme.
- They acted as facilitators in the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme.
- The participants had presented the programme more than once and had two years' experience in working with youth in the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme.

#### **1.5.2.3 Exclusion criteria**

- Participants that did not have experience in presenting the programme were excluded.
- Generic Social Workers working in other fields or other types of diversion programmes were excluded as participants.

#### **1.5.2.4 Sampling method and recruitment**

The sampling method was purposive. An advertisement was posted at DSD in the North West Province, four weeks in advance of the project, in order to advertise the research to prospective participants. The advertisement was also sent to potential participants by means of an e-mail. For this purpose, a list of names of social workers working in the North West Province within youth diversion programmes was obtained from DSD. Advertising was done by an independent person who is not associated with either institution; hence impartial to the project. An administrative assistant at the subject group social work acted as the independent person. Prospective participants were invited to respond to the advertisement by attending an information meeting. As public servants they were not compensated for their travel, as this formed part of their functional duties at DSD. Along with the advert they received project information. They also received the Informed consent form for focus group members and were given a week to consider participation. More information was provided during the information meeting and questions were answered. They signed the informed consent form in the presence of the independent person. Arrangements

were made for the two focus groups held at a Boardroom at one of the Centres close to where the participants work and Boikagong Child and Youth Care Centre, and these sessions lasted longer than an hour and a half. Recruited participants were also given the interview questions to assist them in preparing for the focus group session.

#### **1.5.2.5 Risks and precautions**

This phase of the study can be regarded as a low-risk exercise since participants acted within their professional capacity and were not exposed to any dangers or risks during the research. Their contribution was with regard to the *Rhythm of Life* programme content, an aspect they are familiar with due to their work exposure, and not some sensitive personal matter.

#### **1.5.2.6 Benefits of the research study**

There was no direct benefit for the participants in phase 1 of the research.

Participants gained indirectly through their participation in that they gained new insights regarding the way in which they had presented the *Rhythm of Life* programme and how this can be done differently in future.

The findings from this study were used to adjust refresher training of facilitators presenting the Rhythm programme in the Northwest Province. The benefits outweigh the risks.

#### **1.5.3 Data collection and tools**

Focus group sessions were conducted by a fellow social worker who had received training from the researcher on how to conduct focus groups. This independent focus group facilitator received the manual in advance to prepare for the focus group. The facilitator explained the purpose of the focus group and allowed time to reflect on the manual contents and what was expected of her in this process. This was done to ensure the researcher, whose colleagues are the focus group members, did not enter into a conflicting role. Data was collected based on a focus group interview schedule (see questions on next page). The primary source of data was a visual object, namely the manual of the *Rhythm of Life* programme, other notes, PowerPoint presentations, media, and supportive mechanisms that were also used during the presentation of the programme, were also assessed. These are examples of visual data (Depoy & Gilson, 2017) that play an important role in the themes that were eventually developed from analysis in this phase. Participants were allowed to bring such information to the conversation to illustrate their ideas of what works and does not work. Participants were required to critically reflect on the Manual and all other visual data, while identifying best practices and critiquing ineffective practices. In order to achieve depth of discussion, data collection was preceded by a preparation instruction sent to the participants

prior to the focus group session, requesting them to bring along visual media and critically reflect on the contents of the manual. This, according to Depoy and Gilson (2017), ensured effective incorporation of visual data with the focus group interview. Critical review of the manual was conducted in a systematic manner, involving the different sessions of the programme as indicated elsewhere. Specific questions posed were as follows:

- *What practices in the manual/sessions can be described as “best” according to your experiences with the programme manual? What practices in the manual/sessions are less effective according to your experience?*
- *What alternative practices, media or processes would be advisable to make delivery of the programme more effective?*

These questions reflected delivery mechanism questions. An overall “change logic” reflection, consistent with the programme evaluation theory, furthermore explored. Generalized reflection questions were:

- *Describe to us your thoughts about what programme components cause participants to change through this programme?*
- *What, in your opinion, contributes to change or lack of change in the programme?*
- *What should be done to enhance the change capacity of the programme?*

In both the above components, and consistent with focus group practice, probing questions and the reflective nature of the group were applied to advance reflection, exploration, and generation of new ideas. Hence these questions were initially posed and expanded on, consistent with focus group objectives. Probing questions were posed to stimulate further discussion until the group’s ideas had saturated and no further ideas were presented. This was the point of termination. An identical process was followed for the second group.

Both focus group interviews were digitally recorded. The data were transcribed by the researcher herself by making use of an abridged transcription, formulated on the strength of a summary of what was heard in each focus group. The researcher’s supervisor listened to a section of the digital recording of each focus group session to ascertain that the transcription is a valid representation of the digital recording. This practice was followed regularly in focus group methodology as it is not often possible to directly transcribe verbatim (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The nature of the focus groups does not mandate verbatim analysis since the emphasis was on obtaining the ideas of participants and not the direct words. Furthermore, notes were made on

the relevant pages of the programme manual in hardcopy during the focus group sessions to ensure that important comments were captured.

#### **1.5.4 Data analysis**

De Vos et al. (2011) explain data analysis as a process by means of which order and structure are brought to the mass of collected data. The qualitative data, being obtained from focus group sessions in **Phase 1** were analysed thematically in accordance with Creswell's (2013) approach. The data was manually analysed the data by reviewing all the collected data, reading through it and jotting down ideas at random. The researcher took the abridged transcript and worked through it while writing down ideas that emerged from the answers to questions such as: "What is the importance of the information gathered?" Codes were developed for the text in the transcript and were categorized under topics and subtopics. Similar topics were clustered together and placed in columns. Thereafter themes, each with sub-themes, were identified and interpreted (Creswell, 2013). In view of the fact that the focus group aimed at improving programme content validity, involving the programme manual as input document, specific changes proposed by the focus group were transferred to the programme manual. The final manual was then distributed to the focus group members for their final comment, as a mechanism of validating the findings.

Trustworthiness is discussed in the relevant table at the end of this section.

#### **1.5.5 Phase 2**

**Phase 2** of the **study** was a quantitative study and was conducted by means of a quasi-experimental design, using a one-group pre- and post-test design with a comparison group (Strydom, 2011, p 166). A quasi-experimental design was proposed as the researcher did not have the opportunity of randomly allocating participants to either an experimental or comparison group, as this is not practically feasible within this project. The researcher was also unable to withhold intervention from this particular group (youth in conflict with the law) or allocate them to different interventions at will. The specific population for this study (youth 14 – 17 years of age) can be considered vulnerable because they are from poor communities and had committed an offence for which they had been found guilty. Their relative vulnerability is offset by the fact that at the time of the study, they received social work services and they were in professional care of a social worker who was responsible for ensuring their welfare during the study. The burden of care was thereby removed from the researcher. This situation is not uncommon in social work research, where groups of active clients are frequently the focus of research efforts (Rubin & Babbie, 2016, p. 284). Due to all these factors, the design of choice was quasi-experimental, which, although weaker than a randomized control trial (RCT), is still able to provide worthwhile,

practical results. The quasi-experimental design less likely disturbs or negatively influences participants due to waiting lists or exclusions from an intervention. Due to somewhat limited numbers of participants, the researcher collected her data from multiple sites (three sites) of a single programme delivery; utilizing actual youth participants allocated to the diversion programme in question and not randomly allocated as required by true experiments. Participants' actual cases were referred to the programme for diversion intervention and the researcher therefore followed the ethical rules applicable to youth participants requiring them to complete form A. Furthermore, the study did not utilize a control group consisting of randomly allocated participants from the same population as in the case of the experimental group, as it was not possible to delay treatment to participants. Instead, the researcher utilized a comparison group, comprising similarly aged youth, carefully selected on a quota basis, who had been subjected to the battery of tests similar to that to which the experimental group was subjected but were similar to the experimental group in that they had allegedly committed an offence for which they were committed to a lesser programme. This practice was preferred above a comparison group option where comparison group members would be randomly allocated from a waiting list to either the experimental or comparison group. In such option risk would exist that some youth would not receive the intervention for a period of time, and this had to be prevented. Comparison groups may be obtained from youth participating in lesser interventions or minimal intervention groups (De Vos, 2011; Bryman, 2013). Schwalbe et al.'s (2012) systematic review of diversion programmes indicates that 27% of diversion evaluation studies utilized comparison groups from so-called minimal interventions, whereas 57% utilized controls obtained from referral to the justice system without further follow-up. Most studies (57%) involved children characterized as first-time offenders, and only 10% of studies focused on chronic offenders. In this study participants were both first-time and repeat offenders and this was a key variable in the study as it could determine the "offending experience level" and the depth of pro-criminality. Hence the design for this study was a *Non-equivalent Comparison Groups Design* (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). In this case the researcher controlled for lack of internal validity by comparing the two groups on a range of demographic variables such as age, gender, school grade, geographical location, offence type, number of prior offences and family composition variables such as family size, parental marital status and whether or not the child lived with the family. This data was obtained from each participant's case file at DSD. For this purpose, consent from each participant was sought as part of informed consent procedures at the start of a project. Participants completed the measurement tools at pre- and post-test and completed questionnaires that were kept on the client's file. Case files are kept confidential by social workers in locked cabinets at service points. Access to a participant's file was only given by the participant's social worker upon presentation of the signed ICF, providing access to the client's file. The researcher, in the social worker's office, then gleaned the file for the relevant data, obtained the required information, coded it, and captured it on a

Word document (see attached demographic questionnaire). In the interest of confidentiality, the researcher only used the participant's code number. The data were transferred to an electronic spread sheet for analysis purposes. Upon completion of the project this database was kept on the project leader's password-protected PC, in preparation for analysis. Paper-based Word documents will be stored in a lockable cabinet in the lead researcher's office and later transferred to COMPRES office.

#### **1.5.5.1 Method and procedure**

In line with the quasi-experimental design being followed in this phase of the study, the following plan was proposed:

Three individual data-collection opportunities were implemented in this phase. After completion of recruitment, selection and informed consent processes, participants were prepared for participation in the research. Data collection at Time 1, pre-test occurred. This occurred at the test site during the first meeting of the group. Participants started an hour earlier and completed the pre-test questionnaire. Data collection at Time 2, Post-test 1 was conducted in the same manner after the termination session of the programme. Data collection at Time 3, Post-Test 2 was completed prior to the qualitative interview for Phase 3 of the research. This occurred three months' post intervention. Each participant completed the questionnaire at his/her own pace in a private office setting at the service point (Time 1 and Time 2). For Time 3 data collection, experimental group participants completed the questionnaire individually at the programme site while attending the centre for the individual in-depth interview. Comparison group participants completed Post-Tests 2 and 3 at their service point while attending after-care intervention sessions as per their intervention plans. Participants that requested assistance with completion were assisted by the researcher by reading out questions to the participant and by assisting with completion. All participants completed the scales simultaneously under supervised circumstances and in the presence of the researcher. Data collection was done by the researcher by using paper-based questionnaires, and capturing the results on an SPSS data base. All hard copies of questionnaires were then stored in a lockable cupboard at the COMPRES office for a period of five years, after which the copies will be destroyed. Electronic data were provided to Statistical Consultation Services for analysis and stored on the project leader's password-protected computer.

## Experiment Plan

	Time 1	Intervention	Time 2	Time 3
EXP Group	O1	<b>X</b>	O2	O3
COMP Group	O1	<b>X2</b>	O2	O3



Legend:  
 O = Observation  
 X = Intervention

**Figure 1-1: The experiment plan**

Notice that X refers to the *Rhythm of Life* Intervention and X2 refers to the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme which is considered a lesser intervention in this study. The ROL intervention is a skills training programme of longer duration (8 Weeks), whilst the VOM intervention is a therapeutic intervention without a training component and is focused on mediating the relationship between the offender and the victim. The ROL intervention was preferred for testing as evidence showed that structured cognitive-behavioural interventions appear to be more effective in changing criminal thinking than other types of interventions.

### 1.6 POPULATION

Both male and female offenders between ages 14 and 17 years in the North West Province and who were referred by court to the Department of Social Development for attending the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme were regarded as the population. Currently the *Rhythm of Life* programme is presented in various centres in the North West Province, but the study focused on three service points in the Ngaka Molema District, Ramotshere Moloa, Ratlou and Tswaing service points. These three areas were selected purposively because they represent a rural farming context and because children from these areas are more likely to re-offend according to DSD case load figures and a study by Wright, Kim, Chassin, Losoya and Piquero (2014) that found ecological factors such as poverty to be significantly associated with adolescent anti-social behaviour and offending. These two conditions therefore pose contextual sampling criteria that are suitable for this study.

The population from which the comparison group of youth was drawn and consisted of youth (14 – 17 years of age) who were alleged to have committed an offence, but had not been charged, and had been diverted to an alternative less-intense intervention, the *Victim Offender Mediation* (VOM) programme, and are currently on the active caseloads of the department of social development in the North West Province.

### 1.6.1 Sampling

The researcher involved children (aged 14 – 17 years) from the North West Province who were in the Diversion programme (*Rhythm of Life*) during 2017. The sample for the experimental group consisted of 20 divertees (N=20) who were referred by court to the *Rhythm of Life* programme. The number of 20 was significant as the programme was presented at three intervention sites in the North West Province, and two groups consisted of 10 participants and the third group consisted of 6 participants. Although the *Rhythm of Life* programme is presented at other sites as well, the researcher limited the study to the three selected sites for logistical reasons, funding restrictions and contextual demographics as indicated above. Sample figures were confirmed with a statistician as sufficient for use with non-parametric analysis techniques that are less sensitive to normality issues. The comparison group sample was from the same delivery sites, but those participants were in the VOM intervention which, for purposes of this research, was considered a non-skills oriented, lesser intervention. The VOM programme consists of a carefully planned process during which the youth offender is prepared to meet the victims of his/her deeds during a joint meeting. The offender is then allowed to face victims and ask for forgiveness in some cases. This programme is not a structured skills training programme as is the *Rhythm of Life* programme. The proposed number for the comparison group was 15 and was limited due to fewer children being entered for this intervention. However, it changed to 19 participants. The *Rhythm of Life* programme consists of eight modules and a range of 45-minute interactive sessions, presented once a week for a period of two months. The *Victim Offender Mediation* intervention consists of 3 – 5 sessions that are planned by the social worker responsible for the client. During implementation of the *Rhythm of Life* programme, the facilitators utilize a structured manual to ensure sessions are presented according to a format and promote uniformity in presentation. In contrast, the *Victim Offender Mediation* intervention does not utilize a manual and the activity is planned and executed by the social worker. *Rhythm of Life* programme is accredited as a programme for children, as opposed to the VOM intervention which is not.

#### 1.6.1.1 Inclusion criteria (Experimental group)

The participants who formed part of the research were:

- Residing in the North West Province
- Youth between ages 14 and 17 years at the time of the study
- Those who had a criminal case against them at the time of study

- Those who had been found guilty of either schedule 1 or 2 offences (Minor offences) such as assault and theft (Child Justice Act, 2008)
- Those who had been diverted to *Rhythm of Life* programme
- Participants were first-time or repeat offenders
- Those with the ability to communicate in Afrikaans, English or Setswana

#### **1.6.1.2 Exclusion criteria (Experimental group)**

- Youth having committed schedule 3 offences (rape, murder) were excluded as they were subjected to adult court proceedings and did not qualify for participation in *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme.
- Youth that presented with a Mental Health condition or any physical health condition that, at the time of the study, were found to inhibit the potential of the participant to actively participate in the programme.
- Youth turning 18 at the time of the study were excluded. DSD diversion programmes do not accommodate 18+ year-olds as by the law these are regarded as adults.

#### **1.6.1.3 Inclusion criteria (comparison group)**

- The same criteria were applied to the selection for this group as for the experimental group, with the exception of the last criterion – for participation in this group the participants were referred to the *Victim Offender Mediation* and not the *Rhythm of Life* intervention.
- Participants in the comparison group did not have a confirmed criminal charge against them at the time of recruitment, for which they were found guilty by a court. Although this may make them different from the experimental group, they still are from the same population as the experimental group, as they had committed a behaviour that can be termed an offence but was not defined as such by a court.

#### **1.6.1.4 Exclusion criteria (comparison group)**

- Participants who were for any reason going through adult prosecution processes
- Participants whose parents have not provided parental permission for their participation

- Participants were accepted for participation when they had a criminal charge against them. This ensured that the comparison group was similar to the experimental group, but eligible to be exposed to the lesser type of intervention as indicated above.
- Youth turning 18 at the time of the study were excluded. DSD diversion programmes do not accommodate 18+ year-olds since by law these are regarded as adults.

## **1.6.2 Sampling method and recruitment**

**Recruitment of parents:** According to good ethical procedure, parents have to be approached first to give permission for their child to be approached for participation. Recruitment procedures were similar for both the experimental and the comparison group. The independent person (who is the same person as indicated in phase 1) advertised the research to the parents of prospective youth participants. This was done by posting the advertisement at their respective service centres for a period of three weeks. The advertisements were also posted in the social workers' offices where parents were able to see it during their scheduled visits to their respective centres. The independent person visited the service centres during scheduled advertising periods and informed parents about the proposed study. Since the study was activated in a rural area characterized by poverty circumstances, traditional western methods of telephonic response could not be expected to work. Therefore, the independent person explained the project to parents and verbally asked whether they were interested in participating. Parents expressed interest; she explained the ICF to them and provided details concerning the research. She explained to them that the research was to be done concurrent with the compulsory intervention, and that their permission was needed for the independent person to approach their child during the pre-intervention preparation stage prior to commencement of the programme. She requested parents to study the parental permission form, ask questions and discuss the participation expectations and sign the form if they wished to give permission. They signed the permission form in the presence of the independent person.

### **1.6.2.1 Recruitment of child participants – experimental group**

Youth referred to the programme attended preparation sessions with programme facilitators at the service centres during which programme details were discussed, expectations shared, and motivational levels checked. The independent person presented the research by means of an advertisement and verbal presentation of the research project at that time. The mediator explained the aim and purpose of the study and allowed time for questions to be asked and explained that participation consists of completing a questionnaire at the three times as indicated above. She also explained that participation involves personal individual interviews three months

after completion of the programme and that they must consent to this as well. The independent person explained that participation was treated as confidential and that no information discussed during interviews was handed to DSD or investigating bodies. The research was also anonymous. Participants were given four days to consider participation after which they signed the consent forms at the service point where they were prepared for attending the programme. Signing took place in the presence of the independent person. All information was communicated in an age- and language-appropriate and understandable manner.

Written informed consent implies that all possible information or sufficient information regarding the goal of the research, the procedures that will be utilized during the study, the possible advantages, disadvantages and risks that the respondents could be exposed to, as well as the reliability of the researcher, must be furnished to all potential respondents (Rubin & Babbie, 2014, p. 77).

Although participation in the intervention programme was involuntary and mandated by a court order or formal arrangement, participation in the research is, and remains, voluntary.

#### **1.6.2.2 Recruitment for comparison group**

A similar procedure was followed for recruiting the comparison group from a list of youth that are diverted to participate in VOM. In the case of participation in the comparison group involved the same administration procedure as for the experimental group.

#### **1.6.2.3 Authorization**

The researcher obtained approval for the project from the Department of Social Development (Annexure B).

#### **1.6.2.4 Mediator and Gatekeepers**

The mediator is an independent person, not employed with DSD and someone who does not have contact with participants in any formal manner. Although the department of Social Development approval letter is sufficient permission for implementing the research, the researcher utilized different officials at the respective service points as gatekeepers to facilitate access to participants. Gatekeepers are supervisory or management personnel at the three service points and the coordinators for VOM programmes. Gatekeepers were responsible for making available facilities for completing questionnaires or conducting interviews. They also ensured that recruitment procedures happened independent of DSD professional service activities so as to ensure the independence of the research and that participation remains voluntary. Since the researcher, at the time of the study, was serving as a social worker in the

same area in which the project would be conducted, conflict of interest became eminent. This was managed as follows:

The researcher did not recruit or use her own clients as research participants as this might have influenced the results. She also made use of independent persons and gatekeepers to assist her with gaining access to the research population. Although she was present at the signing of informed consent forms, she did not have contact with clients that could recognize her.

### **1.6.3 PHASE 3**

This phase of the study was conducted from a more interpretivist paradigm of thought. In this approach participant subjectivity is valued and the researcher is interested in the participant's subjective perception regarding the perceived value or impact of the intervention programme. The researcher was therefore interested in the participant's deeper meanings and feelings and idiosyncratic reasons for their behaviours (Rubin & Babbie, 2016:67). In this case the researcher wants to report on the relative impact of the "*Rhythm of Life*" programme on the participant, from the subjective perspective of the participant. This approach is contextual in nature (the participant within the programme as context) and the researcher strives to understand the context or setting in which the participant provides his views on the issue at hand (Creswell, 2013: 48). A review of literature about the intervention programme objectives was completed at this point, and has a thorough understanding of the underlying change logic envisaged by the programme. It follows, that theory, to some extent plays a role in explaining the eventual results of this study (Creswell, 2013: 50). However, there was an open-ended exploratory intention with this phase which was to explore the relative impact of the programme on the individual participant, and was therefore not directly interested in the theoretical background of the programme, but on the participant's personal expressions related to this programme's outcome. Phase 3 of the study thus consisted of a single in-depth qualitative interview that was conducted with each youth participant of the "*Rhythm of Life*" programme within the first twelve-month post-intervention period. Recidivism rates are calculated after twelve months, and this period contains the highest risk of re-offending, therefore an evaluation at some point during this period was important. For this purpose, both the experimental and comparison group were contacted within three months after completion of the programme for a follow-up interview.

The qualitative in-depth design was used for this phase of the project.

#### **1.6.3.1 Population**

The sample for this phase was from the same population that was utilized for phase 2 of the research.

### **1.6.3.2 Sampling:**

This phase does not warrant separate sampling as the researcher continued with the same experimental/comparison group sample as was used in Phase 2 of the study. There were no separate inclusion criteria for this phase. It was expected that the risk for sample attrition increased during this phase of research since participants had a greater chance of being exposed to different factors causing them to drop out of the research. For example, dropout may be caused by participants moving away to another area or province, respondents leaving home or living with another family member. Lastly some participants may re-offend.

### **1.6.3.3 Exclusion criteria**

- Participants that drop out of the research because of re-offending were excluded from further participation as they then move through a different intervention cycle.

### **1.6.3.4 Sampling method and recruitment**

This phase does not require a separate recruitment procedure as this was already completed during phase two of research and the same sample is utilized.

### **1.6.3.5 Data collection method and tools**

Data were collected during a scheduled session with each participant approximately three months after completion of the intervention. Sessions were held at the schools and service office where the participants attended the programme and participants were invited to attend the session at the service office. Interviews occur in the privacy of an office and away from the original social worker that worked with the participant. Participants received an appointment card indicating date and time of the follow-up appointment and were reminded of their attendance one-week prior the data collection session. Each interview was +/- one hour in duration, occurred outside of school time in order not to interfere with school activities, if applicable.

Data were collected by means of qualitative in-depth interviews and use were made of a single question interview schedule and probing questions. The interview question was open-ended and explores perceptions about the benefits of the *“Rhythm of Life”* programme for the individual participant. The main question answered was: *“Right now, do you think (perceive) the programme did anything for you?”* Probing questions was used to gain the necessary depth regarding narratives or commentary provided by participants following their attendance to the programme.

Data was recorded on a digital recorder and the researcher made field notes of her observations additional to the recordings. Interviews were conducted in either English or Setswana, whichever was preferred by the participant.

#### **1.6.3.6 Data management**

Data recordings was translated and transcribed by hired transcription services. The digital recordings were deleted following transcription development. Raw data was stored in a lockable cupboard in the researcher's office and electronic data was stored on a password protected computer in the researcher's office.

Should participants decide to quit participation in this phase, data gathered from previous phase 2 will still be used for analysis purposes

### **1.7 RISKS AND PRECAUTIONS**

The *Rhythm of Life* programme is an existing programme that is presented by the Department of Social Development as part of its normal service rendering to youth and mandate. In this they are highly experienced, having presented this programme since 2012. It is expected that small changes may be made to this programme as a result of Phase 1 of research, but that these changes only altered presentation or delivery of the programme and are not substantial and did not change the programme in its entirety. Neither the researcher nor NWU are primarily responsible for the way in which this programme was presented, as this rests with the DSD. The researcher therefore did not take part in presenting the programme, but only collected data at three points – before, afterwards and after three months.

This phase of the project/study included youth from rural communities and farming areas who are in conflict with the law and are referred by court to attend a diversion programme as indicated. This is a vulnerable group due to their offender status, and possible poverty conditions they may be living in and presence of social problems such as poor school attendance. The following precautions were implemented to protect participant vulnerability. Since the researcher took down a questionnaire three times during phase 2 of the research, any in-depth interaction with participants was limited, seeing that the researcher is not involved in the training of participants. There was no contact between participants and the researcher during the period of the intervention as this could interfere with so-called research reactivity or the tendency of participants to live up to researcher expectations. Participants were also under supervision and individual intervention by social workers (not related to the study in any way) during this phase and were therefore protected from possible harm. To ensure reasonable internal validity in this study, the following arrangements were applied for both the experimental and the comparison group:

- The number of individual consultations that had taken place between the social worker and a participant were carefully recorded.
- Regular checks were performed to ensure consistency in the manner in which the intervention was presented at different sites. This includes the nature of practical, group or homework assignments, and any adverse events beyond the control of facilitators that may have occurred during the presentation of the programme.
- The number of sessions attended by participants may have an influence on the outcomes of the intervention. This was added as a variable.

In the case of the comparison group the following were recorded:

- Number of individual consultations with a social worker during the period between Pre- and Post-test.
- Level of progress in alternative intervention. The researcher ensured that the Post-test 1 administration took place at conclusion of the alternative, lesser intervention.
- The researcher conducted an interview with VOM social workers to determine the extent of interference that may have occurred as a result of extraneous influences.

Lastly, the researcher was concerned about attrition in this experiment; therefore, proposed the following plan to deal with attrition:

- Attrition rates were established for every week of the intervention for both types of intervention, and the effect of actual attrition rates were considered regularly.
- Under the voluntary participation consideration, dropouts were treated as voluntary termination of participation. However, the potential effect of dropout was considered during analysis; thus a dropout was considered a failure in the programme and excluded from data analysis.

These arrangements also lowered the risk level, and the researcher was required to implement additional precautions to protect participants.

#### **1.7.1.1 Benefits**

Attendance of the *Rhythm of Life* programme has a pre-conceived and planned direct benefit for participants. This is part of the built-in change logic of the programme. They learned new social skills that should prevent them from re-offending in future. The programme held the prospect of

direct therapeutic benefit for participants and therefore does not require separate approval by the Minister of Health (Operational Guidelines for Ministerial Consent, 2015). The programme is an existing one and not a completely new intervention. Participation in the research was not holding any direct benefit for the youth participants. The community may benefit indirectly because the research provides new insights regarding the programme and its ability to change pro-criminal attitudes in youth. The indirect benefits for the scientific community is that this project represents a first local effort towards conducting experimental research on youth offenders receiving an intervention that is designed to reduce pro-criminal thinking styles. The scientific community is therefore able to benefit from this study. The study brings the country on par with international practice, where programmes such as these are more actively evaluated.

#### **1.7.1.2 Overall research monitoring plan**

Some activities were performed by a mediator and a focus group moderator who is not the researcher. Monitoring consisted of weekly or bi-weekly updates by the researcher to the project leader in the form of Skype meetings. The researcher coordinated the activities that were performed in the project. She did not present the *Rhythm of Life* programme at all, as this is part of the functions of DSD. Hence DSD monitored and took responsibility for the participants in phase 2 of the study. The researcher on a weekly basis called programme presenters to enquire about the level of progress of participants and possible attrition rates. Data analysis was monitored by progress updates made to the project leader as progress was made. In the best interest of phase 2 participants the researcher informed probation officers who act as presenters of the programme about any observations regarding the participants that they had made during the research.

#### **1.7.1.3 Dissemination of results**

Study results will be disseminated to DSD in the form of a report of findings that will be sent to them at completion of the project.

Participants in Phase 1 of the project were given feedback regarding the proposed changes to the programme and these were implemented before commencement of Phase 2 of the project. They did therefore not receive separate feedback and information.

Phases 2 and 3 youth participants received feedback on the research in the form of a feedback session that was conducted by the social worker as part of their intervention process. Furthermore, each individual participant's results on the scale will be provided to the social worker for follow-up with each participant. This will count as professional assessment that may be of benefit to each youth participant.

#### **1.7.1.4 Choice and Structure of Report**

An article format was chosen for meeting the requirements for the degree Doctor in Social Work. In order to meet the criteria of the Child and Youth Service, the article consists of an introduction, problem statement, aims of the research and the research methodology that is followed.

#### **1.7.1.5 The thesis is structured as follows:**

Section A: Research orientation: This section provides the background and introduction to the study.

Section B: Literature study on Diversion: This chapter provides an in-depth review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks that anchor the study.

Section C: Article 1: Evaluation of the content of the *Rhythm of Life* programme.

Section C: Article 2: The impact of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on pro-criminal attitudes, seen from the perspective of the participants.

Section C: Article 3: An evaluation of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme implemented for youth in conflict with the law in the North West Province.

Section D: Summary, conclusion, limitations and recommendations: Conclusions are drawn from the data, and recommendations are made with regard to the diversion programme in the North West Province.

Section E: Annexures

### **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This section introduced the study; outlined the context and background to the study, its aim and objectives and gave a summary of preliminary literature. It also provided a proposed outline for the research, an overview of the research methodology outlining the population and sampling, data collection and analysis methods and measures to be considered to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. It also provided a discussion of ethical aspects to be taken into consideration. The next section provides a comprehensive and critical review of the literature that is relevant to this study.



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## **SECTION B: LITERATURE STUDY ON DIVERSION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.1 ABSTRACT**

*Diversion is a process of channelling youth away from the formal court system to programmes that are re-integrative. In the South African context, a child can be diverted when he/she acknowledges responsibility for their acts and both the child and his/her parents, or guardians, agree to go the diversion route. This option allows a child to avoid the stigmatizing and grants him/her the opportunity of avoiding a criminal record. The Rhythm of Life programmes are presented to groups of youth on a regular basis under different circumstances by the Department of Social Development and Khulisa with a view to reach certain objectives. The Department of Social Development trained facilitators to facilitate the life skill programme, named Rhythm of Life.*

*The Rhythm of Life programme is frequently presented in the North West Province by DSD officials and is aimed at training youth to divert them from their pro-criminal attitudes by making lifestyle changes that will prevent future offending behaviour. The article presents a critical literature review of the programme components and Logic model underpinning the programme.*

**Keywords:** Diversion programme, *Rhythm of Life* programme, youth, pro-criminal attitudes (PCA), Department of Social Development (DSD)

### **2.2 DEFINITIONS**

#### **2.2.1 Diversion programme**

*“Diversion is the process by which a child acknowledges responsibility for an offence. If the child has not been influenced to acknowledge the responsibility for the offence committed, there should be sufficient evidence against the child to prosecute the offence. As a result, the relevant guardian or parent should give consent to a diversion programme.” (Badenhorst, 2012, p. 4)*

#### **2.2.2 Pro-criminal attitudes (PCA)**

Pro-criminal attitude: Pro-criminal expression refers to the “...specific attitude, value, belief, rationalisation and techniques of neutralisation that imply criminal conduct is acceptable” (Andrews & Bonta, 2010, p. 352).

#### **2.2.3 Life skills programme**

Life skills training are a structured intervention which lasts roughly three months. It takes three months for the youth to be in a programme. It also accommodates groups of about twelve

participants who share similar behavioural problems. Parents attend the first and last session of the programme, which both aim at reintegrating the youth with his/her family because a family functions similar to a system. For the child to function well in his/her life, he/she needs family. Programme activities include role-play, communication skills, problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-esteem, crime prevention and homework; all aimed at changing the way participants think (Steyn, 2011).

## **2.3 INTRODUCTION**

Before the advent of South Africa's democracy in 1994, the legal response to youth in conflict with the law was generally considered inhumane as many children were subjected to harsh corporal punishment – in particular caning by police officers. Youth awaiting trial were often locked away in prisons and police cells for lengthy periods of time without their parents knowing their whereabouts, and in the same cells as adult offenders. Conditions in these circumstances were often harsh (Juvenile Justice for South Africa, 1994).

Changes were brought about to the youth justice system, when in 1997; the Juvenile Justice Project Committee of the South African Law Reform Commission launched an investigation into youth justice and published a discussion paper and a draft bill to reform the child justice system. Following extensive consultation with different roleplayers, including youth interest groups, a final report was submitted to the Minister of Justice in August 2000, followed by parliamentary approval in November 2001, important reforms to the child justice system, intended to introduce a completely new way of managing youth offenders, were captured in the Child Justice Bill (49 of 2002).

Following a period of adjustment and refinement, the Child Justice Act (CJA) (Act 75 of 2008) was approved and endorsed by the South African Parliament in late 2008. The implementation of the Act only took effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, when all systems and role players were adequately prepared to introduce the new Act. The aim of the Child Justice Act is to divert youth who are faced with criminal charges into diversion programmes in order to avoid them from having criminal record.

“Diversion in South Africa takes many forms. Life skills programmes set out to teach pro-social skills to youth in conflict with the law. Detailed attention of these types of interventions is decision-making, communication and conflict resolution skills.” (Steyn, 2010.) This author observed that most of the life skills training programmes introduced at the time, serving as diversion programmes were highly structured and involved mostly group and individual training. In some instances, diversion life skills training programmes were combined with pre-trial community

service and these options ran concurrently. Additionally, and in some cases, child offenders were required to repair damages caused by the offence by performing community service at institutions such as libraries, clinics and police stations, without remuneration, without being sent to prison for the offence committed.

Muntingh (2005, p. 6) emphasised that diversion service providers had to thoroughly understand the nature and objectives of their own programmes and how their implementation contributed to offender re-orientation. He proposed a set of interrelated questions that services must be able to answer, among these what the programme aimed to achieve? Why specific approaches were followed and tasks introduced in particular ways? These questions relate to what is now commonly referred to as the "*programme logic model*".

It was concluded that many local programmes during the early stages of their introduction lacked clear programme logic. Frank (2003) found that very few crime prevention programmes had clear theoretical and process assumptions that guided and justified their interventions. In turn, Schärf (2003, p. 11) stated that there was little or no relationship between the understanding of causality and what behaviour needed to be changed, and how these understandings contributed to the programme mix being formulated. In this regard, the primary requirement for effective programme implementation, according to Muntingh (2005, p. 6) was that any provider of diversion needed to thoroughly understand its own programme, and not only implement the programme routinely.

At the time, little attention was paid to issues such as the relationship between programmes and the reduction in recidivism and such outcome data were generally lacking across most diversion programmes (Steyn, 2010). Although some process evaluations were conducted in the interest of improve diversion programme delivery, very few impact evaluations were conducted to demonstrate programme effectiveness, or the relationship between programme impacts and reoffending, reintegration into the family and community, the level of responsibility, etc. A limited number of outcome studies were published in South Africa. Locally, diversion programmes faced important challenges in terms of human and financial resources; sustainability and potential for growth (Steyn, 2010). This also applied to numerous other civil society initiatives of similar kind. Most diversion initiatives did and still rely heavily on donor support and can only accommodate a limited number of youth at a time. This makes it hardly possible to evaluate programme impacts on a single basis, let alone continuous basis.

Steyn (2010) warned that South African circumstances were vastly different to those in Western countries, and that transfer of existing programmes would be more difficult, and findings from international studies hardly applicable. As a middle income country, South Africa was characterised by visible and continuing socio-economic inequalities due to its socio-political past.

Many youths found and continue to find themselves in situations affected by poverty, unemployed parents, inferior education, blocked opportunities and underdevelopment. Many grow up in unstable households due to alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and absent parental figures. Haines and Case (in Bezuidenhout, 2013) emphasised the compounding influence of several risk factors unique to the South African context of youth offending such as: maladaptive or uncontrollable behaviour, broken families, dysfunctional family life, lack of parental supervision, harsh disciplinary methods, domestic violence, parental involvement in criminal behaviour, and the loss of traditional or cultural norms and values. However, of greater concern is how to assess and verify this background or root causes of the problem in order to understand the involvement of youth in various criminal behaviours and involvement, combining these in applicable programme formulation.

In addition, understanding the role of African cultural traditions and practices in phenomena such as offending is critical in the formulation of diversion programmes. As (Muntingh, 2007, p. 301) explains: Although broad similarities can be drawn in conflict resolution among traditional African communities, the Aborigines in Australia, and the native Indians in North America, understanding how customary practices influence area-specific interventions necessitate localised research into theory and programme delivery. Attempting to capture some of these localised cultural concepts, the child justice act tried to formulate its directives on the African concept of Ubuntu as cornerstone. Ubuntu conjures up notions of unity, commonality, and a shared existence, which stand in contrast to the Western beliefs of individuality and materialism

South Africa, regarded by some as having the highest crime rate in the world with regard to youth offending seems to face increases in this regard, with crime in this country continueing to threaten the personal safety, socio-emotional health and economic upliftment of people living in the country; mostly those who are poor and living in environments that are conducive to crime. Youth victims and youth offenders are the most vulnerable groups, both as victims and perpetrators of crime. (Sloth & Gallinetti, 2004, p.3). According to Kratcoski (2012), youth, growing up in the informal settlements and other substandard environments are likely to be exposed to violence and a culture of wrong-doing on a daily basis. This is because most crimes occur in informal settlements due to a high rate of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment as risk factors.

Many of the current programmes cater for youth considered to be at risk who may not have been arrested for committing an offence or formally referred to a programme through the formal criminal justice system. Also, while the Child Justice Bill (49 of 2002) defines a child as being under the age of 18, some programmes accommodate young people over the age of 18 where this is deemed appropriate.

Based on the foregoing introductory exploration of diversion in South Africa, it is concluded that a need exists for the systematic evaluation of diversion programmes in South Africa. Also, future evaluations would need to consider delivery mechanisms, the programme logic model, impact and outcome evaluation, as a dire need exists in the local context to perform such studies. Based on the aim of the study as described in the documentation so far, the following literature review will focus on diversion programme evaluation, but considering an existing example, the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme as presented by the Department of Social Development in the North West Province as programme example in this study. Following, is a discussion on the *Rhythm of Life* programme:

## **2.4 RHYTHM OF LIFE**

According to the Department of Social Development, the *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014, p. 2), defines life skills as: “adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. The life skills that form part of the *Rhythm of Life* programme are essentially those abilities or skills that help the young person in promoting their own mental well-being and general competencies for facing the realities of life. The *Rhythm of Life* programme equips young persons with knowledge and skills such as problem solving, helping them explore alternatives in problem solving, weighing pros and cons and making rational decisions in solving different problems or issue as these arise. Through effective problem solving, it is believed that young people will be more effective in establishing productive interpersonal relationships with others. All the Departments of Social Development, provincially in South Africa implement the *Rhythm of Life* programme in one way or another. The *Rhythm of Life* programme is implemented at the different service points within each province.

The theoretical rationale underpinning the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme namely, constructive problem solving skills and the extent to which this philosophical underpinning contributes towards change in offending behaviour and thinking about crime as option in problem solving, coincides with what is conceptually termed pro-criminal thinking as reflected in a person’s attitude towards the crime option. This linkage is what the researcher intend to answer. In this section the link between problem solving and criminal thinking is explored by means of a literature study and critical review of the programme components, main content areas of the programme, the programme logic model or theory of change and by establishing whether the programme content accedes to the requirements for producing change in specifically the pro-criminal attitude of youth participants. Answering these questions will assist in confirming the content validity of the programme (Royse, 2004; Blanche et al., 2006) and whether this programme addresses PCA; thus ensuring that what is in the programme correlates with what the researcher wanted to measure.

Banse et al. (2013) provided a detailed review of programmes that address the pro-criminal attitudes of child offenders, which appear as detailed, different types of approaches to criminal thinking focuses. Their conclusion is that many programmes approached criminal thinking indirectly, and that few programmes approached criminal thinking directly.

Consequently, it is difficult to conclude that the reduction of PCAs was always due to the nature of the diversion treatment programme. Some of the studies that have investigated the treatment effects on PCAs and recidivism are unable to report any direct relationship between individual changes in criminal thinking and future reoffending of youth offenders. Mann et al. (2010) concludes it is necessary to demonstrate that criminal thinking is related to recidivism and that influencing these risk factors also moderate recidivism in a theoretical significant logic. The literature on PCAs in its current state does not provide stable conclusions in either direction.

Moreover, it seems encouraging to investigate the different PCA treatment effects especially in the available data analysis of diversion programmes (Barnett et al., 2012; Wakeling et al., 2011). The data analyses of the effects of programmes must include moderator or contact effects of variables such as ethnic background, age, gender, sexual deviance etc.

## **2.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher consulted different sources such as journals, articles and textbooks related to diversion programmes in South Africa and Internationally. The local and international diversion programmes were further compared and contrasted. The researcher also critically examined the underlying logic model of the *Rhythm of Life* programme and what change is promoted and how this change is facilitated by the programme. For critical analysis the researcher followed the guidelines for critical reviews by Bryman (2016), Mongan-Rallis (2014) and also those by Jesson and Lacey (2006) outlining steps in critical analysis of obtained literature. The researcher also researched the impact of Diversion programmes on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law and also youth at risk. Different sources and scales about concerning pro-criminal attitudes and diversion programmes were consulted.

## **2.6 RATIONALE BEHIND THIS STUDY**

The rationale behind this study is to provide an overview of diversion programmes in South Africa and of how these aim to improve pro-social skills in youth attending these programmes. This overview aims to determine whether the diversion programme in the form of the *Rhythm of Life* programme has a positive impact on changing the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law and also on those of youth at risk.

Batley and Maepa (2005, p. 16) point out that “applying harsher punishment to offenders has been shown internationally to have little success in preventing crime”. They further confirmed that imprisonment has long-lasting and devastating effects on young offenders and the community in general. In a study that investigated recidivism among young offenders (Gxubane, 2006) found that institutional experiences of incarcerated youth contributed to them returning to offending behaviour, as they find it very difficult to adjust effectively to their communities when released. Incarceration was found to remain a last resort. If considered to be in the best interest of the child, deprivation of freedom should be for a minimum necessary period and should be limited to exceptional cases, without precluding the possibility of the child’s early release (United Nations, 1985). In the analysis of Schwalbe, Gearing, MacKenzie, Brewer & Ibrahim (2012), stated that it was found that recidivism was the most likely diversion outcome reported across all 28 studies; though, the result of diversion programmes on recidivism was not better than traditional juvenile justice processing and also not vital. Furthermore, Wilson and Hoge (2012) viewed the results that were from 45 studies published between 1972 and 2010 and realised that the average recidivism rate of diverted youths was lower than that of comparisons traditionally incarcerated by the traditional justice system.

Diversion programmes in South Africa often combine restorative justice principles as well as elements of traditional rehabilitation programmes in their programme mix. A qualitative research study performed by Cupido, Kritzinger and Van Aswegen (2005) examined the problems and pitfalls in the implementation of a specific diversion programme. These include a lack of communication between officials, sporadic attendance of the programme, poor commitment towards completing assignments; problems in the composition of the groups, time constraints on sessions and unrealistic expectations by parents regarding the goal and outcome of the programme. The main conclusion drawn from this study was that, while the principles of restorative justice and diversion may have been attractive in itself, these did not necessarily ensure successful implementation of the programme. Kazdin, (2010) claims that there is overpowering evidence to suggest that youth problem-solving skills training and/or parent behavioural management skills training are more effective as intervention option, moreso if some of these modes are combined. The combined treatment approach appeared more effective and powerful in dealing with recidivism.

Thus, to ensure the success of diversion in South Africa, it is important to evaluate the impact of diversion programmes in South Africa. When working with youth it is vital to know which diversion programme to present to fit the offence committed by the youth offender. Diversion programmes are in essence a therapeutic programme that consists of different options. The options of diversion programmes are presented below as explained by Muntingh (2007, p. 102).

## **2.7 DIVERSION PROGRAMME OPTIONS**

According to Berg's research report (2012) the Department of Social Development's training of probation officers on the five new therapeutic diversion programmes contributed to more uniform and consistent implementation of diversion programmes. The range of programmes by DSD at that time consisted of a substance abuse and after-care programme, a youth sex-offender programme, a personal development life-skills programme and a restorative-justice programme. The following section explores different options of diversion programme practices, specifically in South Africa. According to this information the implementation of diversion programmes is standardised across all provinces.

Diversion programmes share the goal of dealing with youths outside more formal juvenile justice system involvement; the nature of diversion implementation and practices differ depending on the type of programme (Hoge, 2016; Mears et al., 2016). These diversion programmes differ significantly in their approaches and methods. The following are options of diversion programmes practised in South Africa:

### **2.7.1 Life Skills Programmes**

Life skills training assumes that offending behaviour results from inadequate skills to react appropriately to particular situations and towards stimuli as indicated by inadequate control of internal impulses hampering pro-social interaction (Steyn, 2010, p. 23). "Life skill" refers to a developmental life skill within a therapeutic and social service context, defined as "the ability to cope and adapt with positive or good behaviour that will enable an individual to deal efficiently and effectively with challenges they encounter" (Steyn, 2010, p. 23). Life skills training also assists youth with a wide range of skills such as "self-esteem and personal growth, communication skills, conflict resolution and effective, decision-making, crime prevention and parent-child relationships" (South Africa, Department of Social Development, 2010, p. 5.) The Department of Social Development in the North West Province is currently implementing these programmes at those service points where no private service providers are available to present these programmes. The programme facilitators or implementers call it the In-house Diversion programme in the form of the *Rhythm of Life* programme.

### **2.7.2 Rhythm of Life**

According to the *Rhythm of Life* Manual (2014) the Department of Social Development is mandated by the Probation Service Act, 1991 to establish programmes for persons at risk, awaiting trial, sentenced, and their families. In terms of Chapter 8 and Chapter 13 of the Youth's Act, 2005 as Amended, the Department is further obligated to provide prevention and early

intervention and to offer designated therapeutic programmes for residential care of youth outside the family environment. The implementation of the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 in 2010 endorsed the provision of diversion programmes to all youth regardless of geographical location and demanded that the programmes be accredited. The main aim of the *Rhythm of Life* programme is to divert youth away from committing crime and also to assist them with their behaviour and attitudes towards crime.

In fulfilling this mandate, the Director Social Crime Prevention developed five social crime therapeutic programmes. The *Rhythm of Life*, as a life skills programme, is one of these five therapeutic programmes and the focus of this study. The goal of the treatment programme is to provide capabilities that promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face realities of life. This is done by fostering cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and social skills. The target group for the programme is youth at risk, youth in conflict with the law (awaiting trial and sentenced) and their families. The main objective of the *Rhythm of Life* as a life skills programme was to change behaviour and improve quality of life. The programmes also play an important role in assisting youth offenders with their pro-criminal attitudes that lead them in offending crime. Youth in conflict with the law who are diverted by court to attend the diversion programme, are so fortunate because the programme also provides them with different skills to deal with their attitudes and beliefs towards criminal thinking. They start taking responsibility for their actions.

### **2.7.3 Mentorship programmes**

With regard to mentoring programmes, a diverted child is connected to an older person who provides support, guidance and leadership in the role of a mentor. The mentor assists the child with feedback and elementary coaching to promote personal growth and development of the child. Mentors who are capacitated to deal with the mentoring programme demands conduct visits at young person's home in order to spend time with them within the context of the community. Mentors also lead by example in the lives of youth and assist them to be better youth in life. Positive interaction is promoted by pleasant vacation activities. In structured mentoring, as is the case with diversion, the mentoring relationship is terminated when the programme goal is reached (Steyn & Louw, 2012).

### **2.7.4 Wilderness Experimental Programmes**

Wilderness/adventure therapy programmes offer life skills through outdoor experiential learning (Mbambo, 2005, p. 80). The majority of these programmes are particularly designed for youth with severe behavioural and emotional problems. These youths are being taken on 'wilderness journeys' for specified periods of time to learn more about themselves and to acquire new skills

so that they can be able to definitely deal with the challenges that they are facing in their social and cultural environment.

### **2.7.5 Vocation Skills Programmes**

Vocation skills training and entrepreneurial programmes offer vocational training such as business skills training, craftsmanship, entrepreneurial skills, computer skills, small business development skills and follow-up training to develop prosocial skills in young persons. This option includes a form of mentoring (Mbambo, 2005, p. 81).

#### **2.7.5.1 Restorative Justice Programmes**

The restorative justice option promotes individual, interpersonal, and community restoration, commonly through the use facilitated dialogue between the perpetrator and the victim, following personal harmdoing (Daly, 2016; Gavin & MacVean, 2018). Restorative justice concentrates on restoring the relationship between the victim and the child offender in order for them to forgive each other without further conflict. As a result, it recognizes the important relationship between victims and perpetrators (Clark, 2011).

Restorative justice programmes include the family group conferencing (FGC) and the *Victim Offender Mediation* (VOM). The Family Group Conferencing (FGC) brings together the child offender, his/her family and the victim of the offence to discuss the criminal event in order to find a solution to its aftermath. All parties are thoroughly prepared prior to the meeting. At the conference, attention is paid to the circumstance which led to the offence and the impact of the crime on the child, his/her family and the victim. The parties then come to an agreement on the steps needed to remedy the offence. Reparation could take place symbolically, for example by the child offender performing certain tasks for the victim or community, or the child and his/her parents can directly compensate the victim for any losses suffered. The aim of the VOM is to provide an opportunity or platform for the victim and the offender to discuss the proceedings surrounding the offence and the consequences for all parties so as to develop a mutually beneficial agreement to remedy it through compensation efforts and community service programmes (Steyn, 2010).

### **2.7.6 Effectiveness of Diversion Programmes**

The question remains whether diversion as social justice concept is effective in decreasing re-offending and whether, as option it is evaluated positively by both offenders and victims. As indicated previously, the reformed child justice system focused on implementation of restorative justice principles. The practice of diversion therefore was to ensure that the well-being of the youth

was promoted whilst upholding their rights, preventing extensive contact and involvement with the justice system, to avoid any stigmatisation effect, and promote positive, prosocial behaviour. Diversion programmes form part of restorative justice as it consists of the VOM (*Victim Offender Mediation*) and the FGC (Family Group Conference).

In view of the rather limited research available on the effectiveness of child diversion programmes in the South African context, the scant evidence regarding which programmes work best for particular profiles of child offenders, further research, and specifically evaluative research is warranted. It was found that recidivism and other outcome data are lacking across most diversion programmes in South Africa (Steyn, 2010). An evaluation study on the effectiveness of South African diversion programmes conducted by Muntingh in 2001, included NICRO's "YES", "Pre-trial Community Service", "Family Group Conferencing" and "The Journey programmes", which produced valuable programme feedback from former participants, although this was only investigated qualitatively. The Muntingh study highlighted a number of points gathered from feedback from former participants, whilst it concluded that re-offending rates and the importance of a diversion register to monitor diversion effectiveness by means of experimental groups had to be conducted in future (Muntingh, 2001).

Findings from the Muntingh (2001) study showed that the typical South African youth diversion programme participants were males, aged 15-17 years, and first offenders charged with mostly property crime. These offenders were found to still reside with their parents and were in their second to third year of secondary schooling (Muntingh, 2001). This evaluation compiled compliance rates, defined the number of young persons that completed the above programmes was found to be above 80%. This can be regarded as a positive indication of participants' commitment to completing the programme. Results further showed that offenders viewed diversion as a second chance whereby they can avoid a formal sentence and criminal record if they successfully complete the programme (Muntingh, 2001). It was disputed that youth who were diverted were at greater risk of falling under the justice system as a result of repeated offending, and there seemed to be an increased risk that second time offences would be dealt with more-strict punishment for their misconduct rather than an actual increase in recidivistic behaviour (Chaple, 2011). The majority of youth tended to have positive thoughts towards criminal thinking; they commit crime thinking that they will always be diverted when they commit crime.

There were different types of diversion creativities that include life-skills models, peer/youth mentorship, wilderness/adventure therapy, skills training/educational and entrepreneurship programmes, restorative justice processes, counselling and therapeutic programmes, community service, restitution, oral or written apologies and multimodal programmes (Mbambo, 2005). The availability of resources and diversion programmes generate an appropriate opportunity,

environment, and life skills because it addresses the educational, vocational, emotional, and physical needs of youth who are in conflict with the law (Bosasa Youth Development Centre, 2014). Different types of diversion programmes have different aims, methods and goals for the rehabilitation of youth in conflict with the law, yet none of these appear to have been tested for effectiveness. Wilson and Hoge (2012) further dishonour the conclusion that diversion is only effective if a diversion treatment programme is provided. However, they found that when a diversion treatment programme is provided, it does not distinguish between the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of diversion programmes; whether active or inactive.

Steyn (2005) points out that while some initiatives conduct process evaluations to improve diversion; very few undertake impact evaluations to demonstrate programme success in the form of reoffending, reintegration into the family and community, level of responsibility etc. In addition, a limited number of outcome studies have been published in South Africa. While much theorising and research on diversion have been conducted in North America, Europe and Australia, it is important to bear in mind that these programmes operate under conditions that differ greatly from South African realities.

Locally, diversion programmes face important challenges in terms of human and financial resources; sustainability and potential for growth (Steyn, 2010). Most diversion programmes rely on donor support and can only accommodate a limited number of youth at a time during diversion implementation. Service providers are supported by the government and other donors to implement diversion programmes. Furthermore, it can be expected that they cater for client profiles that differ substantially from those in Western countries. South Africa is considered a middle-income country with visible and persisting socio-economic inequalities due to its socio-political past. Most of the youth find themselves in situations overwhelmed by poverty, unemployed parents, poorer education, congested opportunities and underdevelopment. The majority of youth grow up in unstable households due to alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, and other social problems.

The diversion system states that detention should be implemented as a last resort but because of significant processing delays in the Indian system, juveniles who should be diverted are often detained for lengthy periods for diversion determinations to be made. In India, all diversion cases are treated the same rather than using the individualized approach in the juvenile system (Kowalski, 1999). This is so even though the law appears to recognise the need to treat cases and juveniles differently depending on the circumstances. Hence all actors in the juvenile justice system are engaged in each case, wasting precious resources, and taking more time than should be required. According to the article of Kowalski (1999), although diversion is used in India, it is

not an explicit goal of the system and neither are protocols in place to assist in implementing the programme.

According to Kowalski (1999), diversion programmes in Canada consist of police discretion and alternative measures for young people between the ages of 12 and 17 throughout the provinces of Canada. In order to participate in diversion, the person must be referred and must consent to diversion and agree that he committed the offence. The attorney will review the case after the referral and determine whether there is sufficient evidence in order to support the charge and also to decide whether diversion is appropriate to the charge levelled against the child. The referral may also come directly from the police officer who is the investigating officer at the initial stage of detention. Some of the police who are working on the case may not arrest but rather warn the child and also accompany them to their respective homes in order to speak to their parents. In England, the DIVERT manager provides the service for all youth aged 10-17 years arrested by police officials in case of less serious offences; their responsibility being to screen and select youth who should be assessed, diverted and should receive intervention from the DIVERT team (Cheshire Youth Justice Services 2017).

In South Africa, diversion programme generally do not focus on qualified first-time offenders only; but also includes youth between the ages of 12 to 18 years. Hence prosecutors may use their discretion by referring youth who are 19-year-olds but still attending school. Participation in a diversion programme is strictly voluntary, but the youth needs to acknowledge that a crime has been committed before he/she is diverted to this type of diversionary alternative (Nicro, 2012). Once an offending child has been arrested by the police, judicial proceedings would not yet have been initiated. Then, as a diversion strategy, the police may use their discretion of not laying charges levelled against the child offender or youth (Smith, 2011).

Canada's diversion from the formal justice system comprises a diverse of measures including an apology to victim, producing crime prevention essays and posters, community service, restitution to the victim and other measures that are culture-specific, particularly for youth from Aboriginal communities. In Canada, when all parties have agreed on a diversion (alternative measures) plan, an agreement is written so that everyone is aware of their respective obligations in the plan. The agreement should consider the offence caused by the offender, and the "attitude, behaviour and motivation of the person as well as the needs and anxieties of the community" (Kowalski, 1999). Compared to the criminal justice system in South Africa which is focused on punishment and concerned with giving offenders what they deserve, restorative justice is concerned with the needs of victims and offenders, including those of the community at large.

Furthermore, the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO, 2012) defines diversion as a process before trial that is used by the courts to dispose of court cases and ensure that individuals are channelled out of the criminal justice system into intervention programmes (diversion) that will contribute by assisting and rectifying their criminal behaviour. Diversion is considered the first option in the case of less serious offences because a young offender is thereby prevented from obtaining a criminal record and also provides them with a second chance in order to rectify their mistakes in life. However, other youth who committed schedule three offences are not granted the opportunity of attending a diversion programme due to the seriousness of their offence.

In Australia's system, formal cautions are recorded. Juvenile conferencing is also part of the Australian programme. This is when all parties, including the offending youth, his family, the victim and victim's family if desired, and others, come together to discuss the offence and its respective impact towards the victim. Eventually, the young person enters into an agreement to make compensations to his victim, including potential apologies, monetary compensation, community work or work for the victim as well as attending counselling (Polk, 1984). In South Africa the Family group conference (FGC) or the *Victim Offender Mediation* (VOM) is applied as process of Restorative Justice. Alexander et al. (2010) stated that victim-offender mediation might change the perception of the offenders towards crime. The mediation can change the views of the victims with regard to the offenders' circumstances. The offenders are likely to gain knowledge of the impact they cause on a victim concerning the offence they committed.

The diversion programme in California, USA is described in the paper, "Reducing Juvenile Recidivism through Pre-Trial Diversion programmes: A Community's Involvement (Panzer, 1997). In California the probation officer or judge and prosecutor have the decision to place a juvenile on informal probation diverting the person from the formal system and requiring participation in certain "pre-trial diversionary programmes," including restitution, community service, continuing education, and counselling. Singh (2016:1) continues by remarking that, in South Africa, there is "inadequate knowledge with regard to the rate of recidivism and the role that reintegration and rehabilitation programmes can play to restrain the high rate of recidivism". She also reported that there is information based on the high turnover of offenders entering and leaving correctional institutions.

(Singh, 2016, p. 1), the summary results of the meta-analyses conducted by Wilson and Hoge (2013) indicated that diversion programmes were more effective in reducing recidivism. A recent meta-analysis of 73 diversion programmes serving primarily low-risk youth (Wilson & Hoge, 2013) indicates that recidivism rates were significantly lower for diversion programmes compared to conventional judicial processing. Of interest, for low-risk offenders, caution-type of programmes

was equally effective as therapeutic programmes. The study did not present data on the characteristics of recidivists or suggested what type of services would be beneficial to youth at moderate or higher levels of risk. However, the evidence suggests that the effectiveness of diversion programmes can be enhanced with the use of evidence-based therapeutic programmes, particularly if these are adjusted according to the youth's level of risk (Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

The programmes for juveniles are designed to be completed in six months and failure to complete may result in the commencement of formal court proceedings while in South Africa, programmes are completed within three months. According to Panzer (1997), the paper also provides a picture of what diversion programmes are doing in other jurisdictions in the US. For example, involvement of parents in diversion is considered as confrontational, according to the author. She notes that at times it is the enabling parental behaviour that results in juvenile criminal conduct. She explains that parents may be held liable for the criminal acts of their youth in some states in the US and in other states parenting skills, support groups, and parent mentoring are mandatory parts of diversion plans (Panzer, 1997). Other parents monitor their youth's behaviour while others are indifferent about monitoring their youth.

In a report published by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice programmes, Swayze & Buskovich, (2012) detail programme specifics for Minnesota counties such as the number of arrests, the type of juvenile cases, the types of diversion programmes, and how each programme runs within the context. Countries that were financially stable had a choice to present multiple diversion programmes; this meant they could have separate programmes for different risk categories of youth in line with the offence committed. Youth with different profiles were not mixed in the same programme as this was not regarded as relevant to their crime; hence youth were grouped to the programme according to the offence committed.

Some 65 counties in Minnesota had only one diversion programme; 16 counties with two to three diversion programmes and four counties with four to six diversion programmes and one county that had seven juvenile diversion programmes. Most counties in Minnesota received diversion referrals from the County Attorney's office (87% of counties); with 40% of counties stating that they received referrals from Law Enforcement (Swayze & Buskovich, 2012). The study also found that most counties in Minnesota have an option related to diversion programmes, meaning that if youth cases are referred to court, they may not agree to be placed in the diversion process. This means that diversion is not optional in Minnesota. Only two counties in Minnesota require a youth with a referral in order to be placed in diversion. The majority of counties only require one meeting or session about an hour in length for completion of their diversion programme while South Africa needs several sessions of 45 minutes or an hour for diversion completion. In the above studies

done it is clear that diversion is implemented differently in different countries. Generally, all diversion programmes focus in some way or another to assist youth offenders with reducing their pro-criminal attitudes towards committing crime and their criminal thinking. They absorb different skills on how to deal with difficulties when facing criminal attitudes.

The paragraph below emphasises the pro-criminal attitudes as youth in conflict with the law, and also at risk, commit crime due to their beliefs, attitudes, and values. It is vital to consider the issue of pro-criminal attitudes in order to understand the root cause of the problem of youth committing crime. Most of the youth offenders display a criminal thinking that crime is normal. However, diversion programmes are available in order to deal with their pro-criminal attitudes. Even though it is widely accepted that PCAs increase the risk of criminal behaviour of youth in conflict with the law and at risk (Andrews & Bonta, 2010), this relationship may differ across different types of offenders and different types of PCAs. Furthermore, the decrease in PCAs in youth offenders by implementing a diversion programme should be conducive in order to neutralise criminal thinking of youth.

## **2.8 PRO-CRIMINAL ATTITUDES**

Pro-criminal expression refers to the "...specific attitude, value, belief, rationalisation and techniques of neutralisation that imply criminal conduct is acceptable" (Andrews & Bonta, 2010, p. 352). This article is specifically concerned about the impact of diversion on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law and at risk in the North West province. Diversion occasionally has a positive impact on the youth's attitudes and beliefs about crime because they attend sessions on how they can control their lifestyle. Andrews and Bonta (2010) included four key aspects constituting a pro-criminal comment:

- Negative attitudes towards the law, courts, and police
- Tolerance for rule violation
- Identification with offenders
- Endorsement of unburden attitudes

Continuing to seek out high-risk situation pro-criminal attitudes has been identified as a key factor in the role of offending and re-offending. Andrews and Bonta (2010), position antisocial attitudes in the 'Big Four' risk factors for reoffending alongside criminal history, antisocial peers and antisocial personality pattern. The role of antisocial attitudes as a contributing factor to offending behaviour and recidivism has been the foundation for a number of theoretical positions including

Sutherland's theory of Differential Association (1947), Control theory (Hirschi, 1969) and Subcultural theory (Cohen, 1988). This section focuses on classifying, assessing and challenging pro-criminal and antisocial attitudes. The term pro-criminal attitudes also refer to how youth feel about committing crime. Having a pro-criminal attitude means that a child sees more benefits to committing a crime.

Pro-criminal refers to supporting or condoning either one's own or another person's criminal behaviour. Youth view things differently in a sense that they tend viewing their negative behaviour as normal or copy from other youth's maladaptive behaviour or attitudes. They also have different beliefs and attitudes towards crime. Pro-criminal is defined by Andrews and Bonta (2010) as the "...specific attitude, value, belief, rationalisation and techniques of neutralisation that imply criminal conduct is acceptable" (p. 352). When identifying pro-criminal comments or actions expressed by young people, comments, or reference to actions of the young person or others were coded as pro-criminal if the researcher judged that they complied with this definition. For example, if the young person utters that crime is a good way to earn money, it was coded as a pro-criminal comment. Other examples include comments such as the victim of the crime was not harmed or that you must fight people you do not like even if people get hurt.

The researcher realised that youth believe that it is normal to commit crime and that youth cannot be arrested for committing crime, while being unaware of the existence of a Juvenile prison and that youth are arrested and sentenced, especially those who had committed serious offences such as murder and rape. Consequently, diversion programmes assist youth offenders with pro-criminal attitudes towards committed crime. PCA plays an important role because it displays the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour with regard to crime. The majority of youth offenders change their criminal thinking after diversion completion. The focus on Pro-criminal attitudes is regarded as impacting the effectiveness of diversion programmes and also its ability to change pro-criminal attitudes in youth.

## **2.9 CONCLUSION**

From the overview of diversion programmes from other countries the researcher conclude to have found a variety of diversion interventions, of various duration and intensity, and that most of these examples tended to focus to some extent on attitudinal and behavioural change of children. It is concluded that the topic of pro-criminal attitudes and the importance of changing these should be a central topic of diversion programmes that have any measure of effectiveness. .

Evaluation of the programme outcomes will be important in ensuring the best diversion services. The necessity for this study is motivated not only by the practical need for evaluative studies in

local context, but also by the urgency for fulfilling the need for methods and practical evidence in the evaluation of diversion programmes on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law.

Diversion programmes in South Africa consist of different options. However, in other countries, they do not implement diversion programmes similar to those implemented in South Africa. It also assists researcher on how other countries evaluate and measure Diversion programme. Diversion initiatives do not only include programmes or interventions, but also processes and enforced pro-social activities. Each and every country implements diversion programmes differently, depending on the merit of the case. Pro-criminal attitudes also play a role in the offence committed by youth with reference to their beliefs, behaviour and attitudes.

## **2.10 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that countries standardise the implementation of diversion programmes similarly in order to advise others when facing challenges during implementation. A diversion programme plays a vital role in all countries, especially those with high numbers of youth in conflict with the law. The effectiveness of the diversion programmes might also be better understood as a process of transforming the child's behaviour, which might not happen immediate but needs to be adopted and experienced timeously. Restorative Justice Processes such as the Family Group Conference (FGC) and the *Victim Offender Mediation* (VOM) will also be vital if implemented in all countries. These processes will enhance the social functioning of victims and also allow the victims to express their feelings related to crime committed by the child offender.

In Section C the researcher will report on the articles, the methodology followed as well as the findings. In **article 1** the researcher used focus groups to evaluate the content of the *Rhythm of Life* programme.

**In article 2** the researcher used experimental and comparison groups to evaluate the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on youth participants.

**In Article 3** the researcher used perceptions of youth participants in the *Rhythm of Life* programme with regard to the impact thereof,

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## **SECTION C: JOURNAL ARTICLES**

### **ARTICLE 1: EVALUATION OF THE CONTENT OF THE *RHYTHM OF LIFE* PROGRAMME**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*Diversion programmes have been evaluated internationally and locally by different researcher. The focus on Pro-criminal attitudes is regarded as impacting on the effectiveness of programmes. It is concluded that there is a dire need for evaluation studies on diversion programmes, specifically concerning their immediate impact on behavioural change and attitude towards youth offending, and crime in general. Life-skills acquisition appears to be an important aspect of the Diversion programme.*

*The main objective of this article was to evaluate and verify the adequacy of the content of the Rhythm of Life diversion programme as a valid intervention for the reduction of PCA in children. In this article, the researcher utilised a qualitative approach consisting of two focus groups so as to collect data. The facilitators of the Diversion programmes have been evaluated internationally and locally by different researcher. The focus on Pro-criminal attitudes is regarded as impacting on the effectiveness of programmes. It is concluded that there is a dire need for evaluation studies on diversion programmes, specifically concerning their immediate impact on behavioural change*

*and attitude towards youth offending, and crime in general. Life-skills acquisition appears to be an important aspect of the Diversion programme.*

*The main objective of this article was to evaluate and verify the appropriateness adequacy of the content of the Rhythm of Life diversion programme as a valid intervention for the reduction of PCA in children.*

*In this article, the researcher utilised a qualitative approach consisting of two focus groups so as to collect data. The facilitators of the Rhythm of Life diversion programme were purposively sampled as participants to evaluate the extent to which the programme meets international and local needs as per the criteria generated from literature. The findings indicated that there is a need for modifying the Rhythm of Life manual in order for the youth to learn not to concentrate too much on activities.*

*Key words: Diversion programme, Rhythm of Life, pro-criminal attitudes, focus group*

## INTRODUCTION

Diversion, according to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008), means diversion of a matter, diverting a child away from the formal court procedures in a criminal matter by means of the procedures established by Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 of the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008). Diversion is conducted post-arrest and involves attendance of a structured programme, with the intention of changing behaviour and reducing the risk of re-offending. The success of Diversion programmes depends on how the probation process (the combined social and justice intervention process) is administered and whether the goals of the programme match and meet the needs of the offenders and the state.

This article forms part of a larger study and the aim is to evaluate the impact of a Diversion programme called *Rhythm of Life* on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes (PCA) of youth in conflict with the law. Pro-Criminal Attitudes (PCA) refers to the "...specific attitude, value, belief, rationalisation and techniques of neutralisation that imply criminal conduct is acceptable" (Andrews & Bonta 2010, p. 352). Pro-criminal attitudes are in part the result of the development of pro-criminal thinking patterns. In this article we evaluate the contents of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme as a valid intervention for the reduction of PCA in children participants. According to Banse (2013, p.3) reduction of PCAs should reduce the risk of criminal behaviour. Moreover, attitudes are only moderately stable and can be changed by appropriate measures of education, training, or therapy. Consequently, PCAs are considered a dynamic risk factor that can be reduced or eliminated by dedicated modules in offender-treatment programmes.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many international diversion programme evaluation studies exist, with different results. According to the article of Linda, Frisman, Hsiu-Ju, Gail, Sturges, Michael Levinson, Madelon, Baranoski, Jessica and Pollard (2006), the goals of evaluating diversion programmes may be different. News stories and editorials continue to express surprise and regret that persons with mental illness may be suffering in prison, instead of receiving appropriate treatment. Therefore a diversion program that does no harm may be superior to non-diversion, since the clients then have access to care. The model of court-based diversion appears to yield no negative effects of diversion, and some positive effects. Future studies or research to verify which individuals benefit most from the diversion programme would be supportive in targeting the programme and using it to paramount efficiency and effectiveness. Several studies evaluated and confirmed programme positive impact (Van der Kooij, 2015; Greenwood, Model, Hydell & Chiesa, 1998) on behaviour and reduction of pro-criminal attitudes. Local evaluation studies evaluated programme effects on recidivism in a twelve-month post-intervention (Muntingh, 2001; Steyn, 2005; Berg, 2012 & Jules-

Maquet, 2013). Findings from these studies varied and recidivism figures of 7% post-intervention were recorded. Longer-term programmes were found to be more effective, and attachment to community support structures such as churches, schools and the family appeared to have had a more positive impact on the performance of youth in diversion programmes than those with weak ties (Roostenburg & Oliphant, 2008).

The methods used in most of these studies involved consumer surveys and other programme metrics analysis, but none of the local studies used pre-and post-programme impact measurement or any measurement of attitudes.

According to Day, Kozar and Davey (2013) and Guydish, Werdegar, Sorensen, Clark and Acampora (1998), the focus on pro-criminal attitudes is regarded as impacting on the effectiveness of programmes. The more recent literature specifically argues that combined adult-education and client-centred, therapeutic approaches to offender rehabilitation programmes appear to be the most effective intervention options for reducing pro-criminal attitudes and behaviour in offenders. They further indicated a need for evaluation studies on diversion programmes, specifically concerning their immediate impact on behavioural change and attitude towards offending and crime in general. Life-skills acquisition appears to be the focus point of most diversion programmes. The researcher has therefore adopted the theory related to criminal thinking and its relationship to pro-criminal attitude forming as the underlying theoretical paradigm. The broader aim of this research endeavour is to focus on diversion programme effectiveness as this is regarded necessary to determine (a) whether youth diversion programmes are able to reduce pro-criminal attitudes in youth participants, (b) whether potential links exist between immediate impacts in terms of PCA and longer-term (three-months post-intervention) recidivism. Such a study contributes to the knowledgebase on diversion programme effectiveness measurement. The *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme, one of the five therapeutic programmes presented by the National Department of Social Development, in the North West Province is selected as the programme example in this study. The aim of this study is to make recommendation based on a qualitative evaluation of the contents and delivery mechanism of the *Rhythm of Life* programme. Firstly a literature review on life-skills programmes as diversion effort, then introduce the *Rhythm of Life* programme and then provide findings from focus groups with programme facilitators. The contribution of this study is to optimise and refine the programme in preparation for a quantitative evaluation of the programme's effectiveness in a later study. It was argued that it would be better to test a programme that has been refined as this programme has not been evaluated before, and facilitators have gained significant experience from presenting the programme over six-year period.

The purpose of the *Rhythm of Life* programme is to promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face realities of life. This is done through fostering cognitive, emotional, interpersonal and social skills. The target group for the programme is youth at risk, youth in conflict with the law (awaiting trial and sentenced) and their families, *Rhythm of Life* manual: (2014).

## **Literature review**

Muntingh (2005, p. 6) emphasises that the most important requirement for any diversion providers or facilitators is that it must thoroughly understand its own program of implementation. They should know how to implement or facilitate the diversion programme in order for youth to benefit accordingly and appropriately. He proposes a set of interrelated questions which services must be able to answer, among them being: What does the program aim to achieve? Why is the program approaching the task in this particular manner? This refers to: what behaviour is to be influenced, and why do service providers follow particular approaches in attempting to change that behaviour?

Attending the *Rhythm of Life* programme has a pre-conceived and planned direct benefit for participants. Most of the children in conflict with the law benefit from diversion as a programme of rehabilitating them. This is part of the built-in change logic of the programme. They learn new social skills that should prevent them from re-offending in future. The programme holds the prospect of direct therapeutic benefit for participants and therefore does not require separate approval by the Minister of Health (Operational Guidelines for Ministerial Consent, 2015).

The programme is not a new intervention because it has been in existence and is the best for youth who are in conflict with the law. The community may benefit indirectly because the research provides new insights regarding the programme and its ability to change pro-criminal attitudes in children. Steyn (2010) points out that limited research is available, especially on the effectiveness of youth diversion programmes in local South African contexts, as well as which programmes work best for particular profiles of child offenders. It was found that recidivism and other outcome data are lacking across most diversion programmes in South Africa. The diversion programme also assists in changing the children's pro-criminal attitudes towards crime. It becomes difficult for diversion facilitators to implement the programmes with lack of resources or without any resources. In South Africa, diversion programme implementers face challenges with regard to financial and human resources, sustainability and potential for growth (Steyn, 2010).

The programme is best for the target group due to the fact that it rehabilitates youth and also accommodates participants who share similar behavioural problems, especially the *Rhythm*

of *Life* programme. However, parents attend the first and last the sessions which aim at reintegrating the youth with his/her family members. The activities of the programme are likely to include problem-solving, role-play and homework aimed at changing the participants' negative thoughts towards crime (Steyn, 2011). The *Rhythm of Life* programme is a Life-skills programme that is based on social cognitive theory, because participants learn the ability to anticipate the consequences of prospective behaviour instead of acting on internal instincts (Bandura, 2001). As a result, they are taught how to deal with their past in order for them to learn from those past experiences.

### **Programme overview**

According to *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014), the *Rhythm of Life* programme follows a life-skills training format. The programme is presented across eight weeks and consists of practical group-work sessions with exercises that are presented in the group setting. The programme is presented by a trained facilitator who, for the duration of the programme, is the primary coordinator of the participants. While the group is in progress, each participant remains in contact with their social worker. The programme is considered a cognitive skill-training programme with a preventative and healthy functional focus. The aim of the programme is to impart positive skills, rather than emphasize the behaviour that had caused participation in the programme. The *Rhythm of Life* programme consists of 8 modules/sessions, the contents of which were evaluated by the focus groups. Following: **Session/module 1** focusses on self-image, and aims to enhance the children to become aware of how they see themselves, how others see them, to explore how they might like to present themselves to the world and also to build confidence. The term self-image is used to refer to a person's mental picture of him-/ herself. The *Rhythm of Life* assists children in changing their self-image because it builds their self-confidence and also moulds their self-actualization in their life.

**Session/module 2** focusses on "*I can understand and understood*" (Effective Communication). The purpose of the session is to give children an opportunity to be heard and also to challenge participants to think about how they listen and what they hear. In order to maintain a good relationship, it is important to continually develop effective communication skills, especially listening skills.

Positive Peer Pressure (assertiveness) is addressed in **session/module 3**. The session aims to teach the youth to think about when to say "No!" and to become aware of the influence people have on them and to consider the influence they can have on others through positive peer pressure. Peer pressure is the feeling of being pushed into doing something by someone of their own age.

The **fourth session/module** focusses on “*I feel*” (EQ and conflict management). The aim of the session is for the youth to understand their emotions, to consider safe ways of expressing emotions and to consider how their reactions to emotions affect others. The outcome is developing the skills to effectively manage conflict.

**Session/module 5** focusses on “*Transforming*” (Problem Solving and Decision Making). This session includes learning to work together in solving problems, to apply rational thinking to solving problems and to become more responsible. Learning how to solve problems effectively is the outcome of the session. **Solving** problems and **making** decisions is **part of** everyday living: at home, at work, at play, even at the grocery store.

**Session/module 6** focusses on time management (time files). It refers to organising your schedule in a way that allows you to get things done in a timely manner, without feeling too overwhelmed or stressed out. The session’s aim is for the children to understand how to manage time effectively and find out what things are detracting them from effective time management. The outcome is to learn how to manage time effectively.

Managing Negative Emotions is **Session/module 7** (Hot stuff) which guides youth into knowing how to identify their emotions and how to release them without negatively impacting on others. The outcome is to develop skills to manage negative emotions effectively. Emotions are our mechanism for processing emotional and physical trauma in our lives.

**Session/module 8**, the last session, focusses on: “*I know what important values are*”. The aim of this session is to increase social interaction, creative expression through writing, experience fun, enjoyment and self-confidence and also to increase self-esteem and self-awareness. The outcome is to understand the important role, values and play in their life. Values are those things that really matter to each of us...the ideas and beliefs we hold as special. Caring for others, for example, is a value; so is the freedom to express our opinions. The offender admits responsibility for the harm created and takes steps to make amends. The victim and the community support the offender while he/she rectifies the situation by paying restitution or performing community service, and the community examines the conditions that facilitated the initial harm (Missouri Bar, 2007).

The programme logic model or theory of change was used to evaluate whether the programme contents answer to requirements for producing change in specifically the pro-criminal attitude of youth participants. It is vital to include the logic model in the study or programmes. The programme logic model and theory of change are concept maps with narrative depictions of programmes in that they visually describe the logic of how your programme is supposed to work.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aims of this research article were:

- To explore the views of Diversion facilitators on interventions regarding the Diversion programme; Focus groups were utilized as feedback mechanism to enrich content in the current programme, critically review its change logic and adjust the programme, should this be necessary.
- To formulate recommendations to the North West Province Department of Social Development with regard to content and presentation mechanism changes necessary to improve the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme for youth in conflict with the law.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research design

The qualitative approach was used for this study in order to evaluate the main content areas of the programme and the programme logic model or theory of change and whether the programme contents answer to requirements for producing change in specifically the pro-criminal attitude of youth participants. According to Creswell (2013, p. 44) qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Focus groups can be described as a group interviews to obtain a better understanding of how people think about issues, products or services (Greef 2011, p.360). In order to collect the qualitative data about the Rhythm of Life programme from participants, focus groups were selected as an ideal method. The focus group setting would provide an effective situation for participants to brainstorm and provide inputs within the group context that are rich in content, and may lead to effective improvement of the programme manual and its presentation.

### Population and sampling

The population consisted of fifty-six facilitators of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme in the North West Province. However, the eight facilitators from three different selected service points, Tswaing, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa service points were drawn from the size. These three service points were identified and selected purposively in the North West Province due to the fact that they represent a rural farming context whilst youth from these areas are more likely to re-offend according to DSD caseload figures of 321 children. All the participants are in the employment of the Department of Social Development in the North West Province and are qualified social workers with more than two years of experience as programme facilitators, some

working as probation officers with more than five years of experience and crime prevention coordinators with an experience of more than five years in presenting the programme. All of the facilitators have been trained in presenting the diversion programmes. They are also authoritative and able to facilitate the programme in an appropriate manner. The population has a direct interest in the programme, the way it is composed, and they acted as key informants in this study. The target population and the sample were chosen based on their knowledge, its elements and the purpose of the study.

The purposive sampling was utilised (Babbie, 2014) to recruit the sample. Criteria for inclusion in the sample were as follows: participants needed to be experienced in presenting, they had to be presenting the programme at rural service points; and they had to demonstrate an interest. Recruitment advertisements were directed to facilitators at the three service points by means of emails and posters, to which prospective participants could indicate their interest. The following Table highlights the number of focus group participants who committed towards participating in the research:

Different focus group participants were divided into two groups:

**Table 3-1**  
**Distribution of Focus Group participants**

	<b>Social Worker</b>	<b>Probation officer</b>	<b>Crime prevention coordinator</b>
Focus Group 1	2	1	1
Focus Group 2	0	3	1

Prospective participants were invited to an information meeting during which more information was provided and questions answered. The prospective participants demonstrated their interest and signed up for participation. Participants were divided into two focus groups which were held independent from each other and the findings of each were integrated during analysis. Focus groups were held at a neutral setting, and the boardrooms at SASSA and Boikagong CYCC respectively were utilised for this purposes. Recruited participants signed informed consent on the day of the group session and were given the interview questions in advance to assist them in preparation for the focus group.

## Data collection

Data was collected by using a focus group interview schedule with the two focus groups consisting of four participants in each who are employed with the Department of Social Development from the three different service points. Digital recordings were made of each meeting and these were transformed into verbatim textual transcripts in preparation for analysis. Transcribing was done by the researcher herself by making use of an abridged transcription, formulated on the strength of a summary of what was heard in each focus group. The researcher's supervisor listened to a section of the digital recording of each focus group session to ascertain that the transcripts were valid representations of the digital recordings. This practice was in accordance with focus group methodology as it is not often possible to directly transcribe verbatim (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The nature of the focus groups does not mandate verbatim analysis since the emphasis was on obtaining the ideas of participants and not the direct words. Moreover, notes were made on the relevant pages of the programme manual in the hardcopy during the focus group sessions in order to ensure that vital comments were captured appropriately.

Participants consented to prepare for the focus group session and were required to critically reflect upon the programme manual and all other visual presentation slides, identifying best practices and critiquing ineffective practices. They were also requested to bring along suggestions they may have regarding changes they want to recommend to the presentation format. Critical review of the manual was conducted in a systematic manner, involving discussion of the different sessions of the programme as indicated elsewhere.

*The specific questions that were asked were as follows:*

- 1. What practices in the manual/sessions can be described as "best" according to your experiences with the programme manual?*
- 2. What practices in the manual/sessions are less effective according to your experience?*
- 3. What alternative practices, media or processes would be advisable to make delivery of the programme more effective?*

*The following questions in the interview schedule reflected on the delivery mechanism. The participants also reflected upon an overall "change logic" consistent with the programme evaluation theory. Generalized reflection questions were:*

- 1. Tell us your thoughts about what programme components cause participants to change through this programme?*
- 2. What, in your opinion, contributes to change or lack of change in the programme?*
- 3. What should be done to enhance the change capacity of the programme?*

*At the end of the session the group facilitator would ask if participants had anything to add that was not said before and if no further information was given, the session was terminated.*

## **Data analysis**

De Vos et al. (2011, p.339-402) explain data analysis as a process by which order and structure are brought to the mass of collected data. The qualitative data, obtained from focused group sessions in **Phase 1**, were analysed thematically in accordance with Creswell's (2013) approach. The researcher reviewed all the collected data by reading through it and randomly jotting down ideas. Qualitative data analysis methodology, specifically thematic analysis, was utilised according to the eight steps indicated by Creswell (2013). The steps of analysis comprise of organizing the data, reading and describing, classifying and interpreting data into codes and themes, and lastly representing and visualizing the data. Through a process of in-vivo coding the researcher generated topics and sub-topics from the direct perceptual data and developed an in-depth understanding of the themes that emerged from the data.

## **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). Trustworthiness in the study that was enhanced by making sure that the research process flowed logically and that data were well-documented throughout the process. The researcher undertook the following in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (De Vos *et al.* 2011; Schurink *et al.*, 2011): Credibility was ensured by accurately identifying participants through difficult recruitment activities. The researcher ensured that proper engagement took place with the respondents during the completion of the in-depth qualitative interviews by posing the question in a language that the participants understood. The data collected were compiled in a comprehensive report immediately after focus group data collection. Accurate and precise records were kept of the analysis process to ensure consistency in the emerging themes.

## **Ethical aspects**

The study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty of Health Sciences of North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (NWU 00019-18-S1) (Annexure A). Prior to the commencement of the study the researcher also obtained ethical approval (Annexure B) from the North West Department of Social Development to conduct a study. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and participants could withdraw at any time

should they have wished to do so. Participants signed informed consent forms (Annexure C) before the commencement of the focus group interview and they were made fully aware of what the study entailed and what was expected from them. Informed consent is an essential condition for research study (Strydom, 2011, p.119). Written informed consent implies that all possible information or sufficient information regarding the goal of the research, the procedures that were followed during the study, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers that the participants could be exposed to, as well as the reliability of the researcher, have to be furnished to all potential participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2014, p.77).

The researcher gave pseudonym numbers, 1-8, to the participants due to confidentiality ethics. Privacy indicated personal privacy, while confidentiality was indicative of information that must be dealt with in a confidential manner. Information that was obtained from the participants was obtained in a confidential manner so that participants could not be identified at a later stage (De Vos *et al.*, 2011). The participants were informed that the focus group discussions would be recorded and that they had the right to object. In order to establish trustworthiness, the researcher employed four constructs identified by Lincoln and Guba: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Schurink *et al.*, 2011).

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The data analysis produced seven themes. Data from literature were used to substantiate the findings during a literature control and direct responses of the participants are also quoted in order to reflect the themes. According to Campbell *et al.* (2017) the findings from relevant studies should be analysed and arranged according to the themes and sub-themes that emanate from the data and not simply reported in a regimental fashion. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher allotted numbers to the participants. Figure 1 below provides a summary of the identified themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data which will be discussed and substantiated.



**Figure 3-1** Identified themes and sub-themes

## Theme 1: Content of the sessions of the programme

The main objective of *Rhythm of Life* is to change behaviour and improve the quality of life. The programme is an intervention tool to be implemented by the probation services practitioners and social workers in secure care facilities. The participants were questioned about the content in the programme. This type of question focuses on confirming the content validity of the programme (Royse, 2004; Blanche et al., 2006) and whether this programme addresses Pro Criminal Attitude (PCA); thus ensuring that the content of the programme correlates with what is being measured. The participants' overall views were more or less the same and they all expressed a positive view towards the content of the *Rhythm of Life* programme. They described the programme as the “best” and also “very important”. The reason for stating this is that they as implementers are well-trained in presenting the *Rhythm of Life* programme and they also gain more experience from implementing it frequently. Their experience that this programme definitely made a difference with regard to the pro-criminal activities of the divertees. This programme was developed as a life-skills programme, and according to Steyn (2010, p. 23) life-skills training assumes that offending behaviour stems from inadequate skills to react appropriately to a particular situations or where the inadequate control of internal impulses hampers pro-social interaction. Developmental life-skills cover a wide range of skills, such as personal awareness, communication skills, conflict resolution and effective mediation.

The participants commented on the introduction as well as the first few sessions, because for them the content of the first part of this programme was important. The *Rhythm of Life* programme starts with an introduction to the sessions/modules. According to the Oxford Mini Dictionary (2007) introduction is a piece at the beginning of a book explaining its contents. Participant 1 indicated that the introduction part is very vital because it gives a good orientation to the programme.

All the participants mentioned that the content of **session/module one: secret of happiness** is good. It focuses on the self-image of the children attending the diversion programme and the aim of this session is for the divertees to do self-introspection, to understand themselves and to get to know themselves better. One participant in a focus group indicated that after session one “a child can be aware of him- or herself to be more responsible”. Research indicates that there delinquency and the self-concept correlates strongly. Juvenile delinquents have been found to have a low self-concept, low self-esteem and also lack personal identity (Maphila, 2000). The aim of this session is to improve the self-image of the divertees. It was emphasized by Maruna (2001) that desistance research has revealed that criminals who desist from crime manage to maintain a positive self-concept while finding new ways to ascribe sense and meaning to their lives without committing crimes.

**Session/module two focuses on communication.** According to the World Health Organization (2009) interventions that support youth in the development of life-skills can have positive impacts on young people's opportunities through improving pro-social abilities, educational attainment and employment prospects and can assist in preventing violence. The summary report of Western Cape Government (2018) indicated that more attention should be given to conflict resolution skills within the more general life-skills programmes. Youth and their caregivers should be equipped to identify individual factors that provoke violent behaviour and how to better respond to it. In the *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014) communication means sending and receiving messages. Messages can be both verbal (what you say) and non-verbal (your face and body language). Communication gave the divertees an opportunity to be heard, and to also challenge the divertees to think about how they listen and what they hear. The participants indicated that the content in **session two on communication** is good because youth can gain a better understanding of how to communicate a message but also better understand what message their parents or peers at school want to communicate. Communication improves and strengthens emotional relationships as well as children's attachment to their parents (Garcia, Restubog, Toledano, Tolentino, & Rafferty, 2012).

Peer pressure is the feeling of being pushed into doing something by someone of your age. It can be positive or negative peer pressure. One participant stated that **session/module three which focuses on peer pressure** is important because youth realise or see the difference when they do the activities or make changes. The summary report of Western Cape Government (2018) emphasized that children are able to see the difference in peer pressure. Peer and school factors that assisted in reducing the risk of a youth reoffending included efforts such as peer support amongst youth. Changing their peer associations and developing intimate relationships seemed to redirect the children's trajectory away from crime. Peer groups or associations have their own cultures, sanctions or rituals into which members are socialized and accordingly, members (especially new members) who do not comply with any of these may be ostracised (Carlson, 2010).

The participants agreed that the first few sessions are well-placed in the programme. At the start of the programme the youth in the diversion programme are still in a process of getting to know one another and the first few sessions help them in this respect. Diversion happens when a child acknowledges responsibility for the act and both they and their respective parents or guardians agree to the Diversion programme (Richardson, 2005, p. 38). The programme content should be based on a thorough assessment of a range of issues relating to individual children and the group as a whole. The implementers should make sure that when they assess youth in

conflict with the law, they should consider their attitudes and behaviour portrayed individually and in a group setting.

### **Sub-theme 1: Revision of topics**

It is standard practice that the presenters of the *Rhythm of Life* programme summarise or recap each session after completion of that session. The reason for this is to determine whether the topic under discussion was understood. If it seems that the divertees did not understand the information, the participants of the focus group suggested that the session should be revised. It was suggested that the facilitators make time to revise topics that are not clearly understood by the divertees during the recap of the modules/sessions. Participant 2 reported that “*when modules are not understood, the presenter should revise them and take at least 35 minutes as a facilitator to clarify matters; I also think children should be grouped in terms of age and level of maturity, when implementing the programme. Remember I can be 17 and somebody can be 17, but we cannot have the same IQ level*”. It was useful to consider the general level of understanding of the children when they are grouped together when presenting a programme, taking into consideration the fact that there is a much higher prevalence of intellectual disabilities and language difficulties among youth in conflict with the law. Presenters must ensure that they and others around them adapt the manner in which they communicate the different topics of the programme to the children, and also understand their needs.

### **Sub-theme 2: Aftercare Programme**

Aftercare services were implemented by the social crime prevention officials after the youth completed the diversion programme. These were implemented in order to assist or to keep youth away from committing further criminal activities or return to a crime intense environment. According to the *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014) aftercare services are designed to support youth’s return to their families and communities. Aftercare services may include probation, parole, counselling and enrolment in community programmes or other forms of treatment. Participant 3 reported that an aftercare programme should be implemented more rigorously. The aftercare programme will help to check whether the youth are still “*on the right track and still behaving well*”. Currently in the North West Province, this aspect was not effectively implemented according to the participants. It was mentioned that the officials who were implementing Diversion were not enough to implement aftercare services as well. This is confirmed by a summary report done by the Western Cape Government (2018) which stated that “Aftercare services for the youth offenders are almost non-existent. Challenges such as the workload of probation officers were mentioned as one of the reasons for the lack of aftercare services. Despite the lack of aftercare services, the probation officers agreed that aftercare service for the children and caregivers could

be the most crucial part of the diversion process. Aftercare services lacked family-focused interventions and support”.

Despite the lack of aftercare services, the participants agreed that aftercare service for the youth and caregivers could be the most crucial part of the diversion process. Participant 4 indicated that “...*more staff is needed to assist because they will provide aftercare services and then can track the change effect on these children*”. According to the summary report of Western Cape Government (2018), the findings of the evaluation suggest that aftercare support could play a vital role in youth reoffending. It appears that, in the regions where aftercare support was provided, youth were better able to maintain the behavioural change and implement the skills and knowledge acquired through the diversion programmes. The quality of the aftercare services and particularly that of the APO or probation officer was of utmost importance.

### **Sub-theme 3: Best practices identified in the manual/sessions**

The best practices in this manual according to the focus group members refer to the module/sessions that the divertees can understand the best and that will assist the divertees to prevent re-offending as well as to assist them in expressing their feelings regarding crime-related issues.

According to participant 4, session/module two of the programme focuses on communication: “*I can understand and be understood, is the best*” and added that it is more important for a child to communicate and to be listened to. Communication is key in all families.

For participant 3 Module three was the best, which focuses on positive peer pressure. The reason for this was that most of the children were not assertive because they were controlled by friends, resulting in committing a crime.

Participant 2 stated that the first two modules might not be the best placed in the programme due to the fact that the children are still trying to get to know each other, which can affect their participation. Participant 3 indicated that there was nothing that could be regarded as less effective, except that more time should be given for presenting the programme; everything was important (Banse, 2013). According to Western Cape study (2018) changes to the existing accredited programmes were commonly made in the field. These changes were a consequence of limited time, workload, the availability of facilitators and what the facilitators understood to be working in the field. Transformation is good because most of the issues that were not attended to, will be resolved. It is difficult to work under pressure due to limited time and a heavy workload which could lead to none-performance, especially on facilitating diversion programmes. Diversion

programmes needed to be allocated more time for implementation in order for children to understand the importance of attending a programme and for change to take place.

### **Theme 2: More time for presenting sessions**

All the participants indicated that more time was needed to present the modules/sessions of the diversion programme because the programme was presented after school and the current time allocation was insufficient. Most of the youth went home for a meal before attending the programme; consequently they arrive late for the sessions. The Department should consider assisting youth with food or snacks in order for them to come to the sessions straight after school, without any delay.

Participant 1 elaborated that *‘There’s nothing that we can regard as less effective, except for given more time’*. The issue of transforming the divertees was emphasized by participant 2. According to this participant it was not something that they could do within a short period of time; it was a process and the tempo of change depended on the individual. This participant recommended that the *Rhythm of Life* manual needed to be reviewed and that more time be granted for presenting the programme. Since the implementation of the Act, probation officers played a much more central role than before and often did not always have the capacity and time to present diversion programmes, especially in urban areas, as emphasised in the study by Berg (2012). The effectiveness of the diversion programmes might be better understood as a process; any transformation in the youth’s behaviour might not be immediate but needed to be internalised and practised over time.

According to participant 3: “it will be advisable for us to issue pamphlets with information on to the divertees. It was also said that “more time is needed for a person to go through the information and allow time for them to write down.”

### **Theme 3: Ineffective activities during the module/sessions of the programme**

According to the Oxford Mini Dictionary (2007) *activities* refers to an action or occupation. Participants stated that there were a large number of activities that they had to perform and they were unable to do some of these activities with the children because of insufficient resources for the implementation thereof. *“The manual comprises of so many activities without enough resources. The activities should be reduced.”* The focus group members indicated that there were too many activities in the *Rhythm of Life* manual that could not implement and should therefore be reduced.

### **Sub-theme 3: Programme non-compliance**

Participant 2 indicated that during implementation the children start to “*reshuffle*”, meaning that children started absconding from the programme due to different reasons and problems they encountered in life such as poverty, dysfunctional families, and literacy. This can lead to non-compliance of youth because the youth could end up being arrested or re-offending. According to Berg (2012) the minimum programme outcomes standard specifies that each youth must be adequately assessed both by probation officers and a Diversion service provider before placement in a suitable programme. Therefore, in cases where a youth is referred incorrectly, non-compliance with the minimum standards is the results. The Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008): Amended National Policy Framework (2018) also addressed the issue of re-offending among child offenders which could be attributed, at least in part, to the corrupting and damaging effect that incarceration had on youth in conflict with the law. It is in response to this, as well as the constitutional injunction of section 28 (1) (g) that the Act provides for the incarceration of children only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

According to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) Sec 58(1), if a child fails to comply with any diversion order, the magistrate referred to in section 42, the inquiry magistrate or child justice court, may, on being notified of the failure, in the prescribed manner, issue a warrant for the arrest of the child or cause a summons to be issued in respect of the child in terms of section 19, to appear before the magistrate, inquiry magistrate or child justice court.

### **Theme 4: Resources**

Resources for implementers in the Department of Social Development were a burning issue because most of the implementers were unable to implement the programme due to a lack of resources necessary for the successful implementation of the manual. The participants indicated that the Department of Social Development did not provide them with enough material to work with when they implement the programme. They identified that before starting the sessions, they needed programme materials, such as stationary for the youth, and food refreshments, in order to implement the activities of the programme. It will be vital for the Department of Social Development to make sure that Diversion facilitators are well-resourced for the effective service delivery.

Participant 2 reported that “*the implementation part of the programme is less effective*”. This meant that without resources the programme would be less effective. One of the participants indicated that “*when you do not have resources, you know it is going to be difficult to implement the programme*”. In a qualitative research performed by Cupido, Kritzinger and Van Aswegen

(2005) they examined the problems and pitfalls encountered regarding the implementation of one specific diversion programme. They discovered that many researchers evaluated the implementation of the Diversion programme as ineffective due to resource problems.

Recommendations from the focus group participants are that the diversion programme be modified in terms of minimizing activities and also in providing resources to successfully implement the programme. They emphasized less activities to be implemented and also that they should receive the material for the children in order for the implementation to flow.

Participant 4 emphasized the need for resources: "Like we said resources, resources and if there can be a budget to avail more resources for us to give more time to the programme." The participant further indicated that "the change will be recognized but with less resource obviously there will be less change".

The Diversion programme set out to achieve objectives such as: to improve learners' behaviour and achievement; and to assist learners in overcoming behavioural, emotional and social problems (Munoz, 2001, p.6). Children will not be interested in participating in the programme unless resources are available and they have a good facilitator. Furthermore, the environment must also be conducive for the children to enjoy staying during the session and to actively participate without absconding. Thus the participants felt that they must be given the necessary resources to implement the programme effectively. The programme facilitators must be qualified professionals that can ensure the best diversion practice possible to youth in conflict with the law (Tserere, 2006, p.37; Wood, 2003, p.13).

Participants evaluated and concluded that the practice in the manual is less effective due to lack of resources in the North-West Department of Social Development. "*If there are resources available for us as practitioners, we can go the extra mile*". "Children must also be given food because sessions are presented after school hours; thus according to participant 3, youth do not have enough time to go home for food before returning to school to attend the sessions. Provision of food for youth will assist in high attendance and participation of children in the programme. Some of the youth come from poverty-stricken families; hence it is difficult for them to find food at home after school. In this situation social workers need to intervene. This was also confirmed by a study executed by the Western Cape Government (2018). Proper venues for the facilitation of diversion programmes are needed, tool kits and programme manuals were absent in certain SDAs. Facilitators frequently mentioned the need to utilize their personal items during implementation of the programme.

## **Theme 5: Marketing Diversion programmes to prevent children from committing crime**

Awareness campaigns were significant because it assisted youth and the community at large to be knowledgeable about Diversion programmes and the implementation thereof. It is a way of marketing the Departmental services.

One of the participants reported that awareness campaigns could also be used as part of raising awareness. This will assist because the community members will refer children at risk to the Department of Social Development for further assistance due to crime committed. Participant 2: *“I think firstly we have to start with awareness campaigns that are presented to schools and even at the communities.”*

According to Participant 3: *“We end up focusing on those who are being diverted through courts, but the effectiveness of diversion programmes will be seen when it is presented to as many children as possible who are at risk, preventing them to commit crime”*. Participant 3 indicated that she thinks the Department must ensure that they implement the entire programme to youth at risk. Most of the programme’s focus is on children in conflict with the law rather than youth at risk. It will be significant if the Department can implement prevention programmes for youth at risk before they can commit a crime.

Participant 4 added: *“the Department can make sure that we implement this programme mostly to youth who are at risk”*. In addition, awareness campaigns, pamphlets and social media can assist in spreading the information on *Rhythm of Life* to the community to inform them about diversion and to support children in conflict with the law.

One of the participants stated that they utilised the local radio station and then raise awareness on social crime prevention as an early intervention. This assisted youth to be informed on the consequences of committing crime. Market of this programme is needed especially talking to the stakeholders such as schools because schools had children who are at risk. This was part of prevention at schools. Participants highlighted the fact that the awareness campaigns and maybe creating pamphlets with information assisted youth to change. *“It will be advisable for us to issue pamphlets that will give more of the information as an aid in order to prevent youth from doing criminal activities”*. This type of intervention was seen as early intervention.

## **Theme 6: Environment and support system**

*Environment* refers to where the child stays, the immediate family home and also the community. The support systems are thus the people who provide support to a child in his/her environment. The participants in the focus groups agreed that the focus has to be on changing

the environment to a crime-free active support system that will make change possible. Support from family and communities are necessary. It is important for parents to provide their children with support because when a youth commits crime, the parents or family at large will also be affected. Systems theory is also important as it ties in well with the above-mentioned concepts, because it advocates for the inclusion of other systems involved with the client rather than focusing on the individual client in isolation; it sees human behaviour as the outcome of reciprocal interactions between persons operating within the linked social systems (Hutchinson & Charlesworth, 2011). Participant 2 indicated that the “...*environment plays a role for children to change. The community should give support to youth and also to the stakeholders*” – stakeholders such as SAPS, Department of Justice, and Department of Education including NPA. According to participant 4 “*youth will know that they are not alone because of the support they receive from probation officers and parents*”.

The ecological perspective talks about a person and an environment. The ecological context is the setting or surroundings that influence behaviour and can include the physical environment, the social occurrence and the social rules involved (Dalton, Elias 8: Wandersman, 2001). According to participant 3 “...*The environment can be part of change for the divertees*”. The participant elaborated that the environment has to be conducive because it can change a person positively or negatively and that the environment plays a role in youth committing crime.

Educators knowledgeable about this programme can support the youth at school. The environment in which adolescents live can influence them, especially when parental guidance is lacking. The school is a major and important environment in which a youth develops during the formative years. When parents do not consistently react to the undesired behaviour of an adolescent, the youth might continue to engage in more deviant behaviours in the school (Suleimen 2011). Poor academic performance also predisposes youth to deviant behaviours. Even municipalities can play an important role by developing a ward-based model to prevent crime in the community and support those in conflict with the law.

### **Theme 7: Children should be grouped in terms of age level of maturity**

When presenting the Diversion programmes, the group consists of children of different age groups. Youth are not grouped according to their age, but are referred by court. One of the participants indicated that “*youth should be grouped in terms of age and level of maturity*”. Their cognitive level is not the same because some children are fast learners whereas others are slow in learning. Interest is developed from the cognitive level including values, attitudes, decision-making and knowledge (Schatzki 2000) and these performances are crucial to understanding everyday life. Amongst other things, attention should be paid to: the ages of the youth; their levels

of education; cognitive ability; language; developmental needs; strengths and capacities; risk factors; gender (Richardson et al., 2005, p.38). It is important to take the above into consideration for reaching success with the programme. Some older youth with a lower cognitive developmental level will end up not attending sessions if they think the younger ones will laugh at them. The programme is interactive, and facilitators ask questions related to the programme, and some younger youth are more capable than the older ones in answering the questions. However, those that find the sessions too boring will also not attend.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion the following strengths and challenges of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme are discussed. The strengths of *Rhythm of Life* implementers are as follows:

- The Probation officers in South Africa and facilitators who implement the *Rhythm of Life* programme are well-trained by the Department of Social Development. They have good presentation skills and are able to implement the programme.
- The facilitators of *Rhythm of Life* are qualified social workers with presentation skills. They are all capacitated to present the programme by the National Department of Social Development.
- Most of the facilitators are master trainers of the programme; consequently they are able to roll out the programme to other programme implementers.
- The programme assists children in modifying their attitudes and behaviours towards crime and also not to have a criminal record or to be sentenced.
- Youth tend to enjoy the programme implementation because they participate actively in the sessions.

The underpinning principle of the strengths perspective is vital to the study, because it is regarded as one of the newer paradigms to have emerged in the social work field as it focuses on strengths rather than deficits (Rapp & Goscha, 2006; Saleeby, 2012). The focus is thus on the strengths of the youth offender and on how this can assist the child in rebuilding self-confidence.

### **Challenges to implementing the programme:**

- It is difficult for the implementers to implement the programme due to inadequate resources.
- Facilitators are not given sufficient time to present the *Rhythm of Life* programme; hence children will not receive all the necessary information.
- The content of the *Rhythm of Life* manual is good; hence activities need time so that the youth can understand the message of criminal activities.

- Some probation officers place youth in diversion programmes that are not relevant to the offence they had committed resulting in the sessions becoming ineffective. For example, a youth who has committed a sexual offence should be placed in a sexual offence programme – not in a substance abuse programme.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher recommended the following regarding the *Rhythm of Life* Diversion Programme for probation officers and other facilitators presenting the programme as well as for divertees attending the programme.

**Recommendation for probation officers and other facilitators:**

- The Department of Social Development should avail the relevant resources for the probation officers for effective and efficient implementation of the programme. Also the environment must be conducive for the children to enjoy staying there during the session to actively participate in the sessions of the programme and not to abscond.
- It is recommended that the activities in the manual must be reduced; due to time constrain it was not possible to do all the activities. Also for activities to be implemented more resources should be in place. If the implementers can have access to the resources, they can use them to accomplish their planned activities. If the Department of Social Development provides resources such as scissors, mirrors, stationery etc. the programme will run smoothly. Each session/manual contains a specific list of resources needed for the implementation of the Rhythm of Life programme.
- The programme does not address the logic model due to the fact that resources are insufficient to enable programme implementation. Resources are needed to operate the programme.
- The Department of Social Development should establish and strengthen relationships with other role players in the child's environment so that facilitators can, for example, visit youth at school without interruptions.
- The skills imparted during the diversion programme and the implementation thereof will assist the diversion facilitators to evaluate the impact of the programme on youth in conflict with the law.

**Recommendations for divertees attending the programme:**

- Youth who abscond or experience problems during programme implementation must receive counselling. Counselling helps delinquents to express their feelings without fear and to

understand the consequences of any non-complying behaviour. Counselling not only brings discipline among the delinquents but also makes them confident to believe that there are people who support them and care about them (Mugerwa, 2010).

- Awareness campaigns are needed in order to raise awareness of the *Rhythm of Life* programme. This life-skills programme can be presented at schools and even at the communities as an early intervention or prevention measure.
- Youth and caregivers should constantly be informed about the importance of complying with the diversion programme and the consequences thereof.
- Aftercare programmes should be implemented as a supportive measure to help check whether the children are still on the right track and still behaving well. According to a Western Cape study (May, 2018) the overall support provided to the family, during and post-diversion programme, are limited. This is especially the case when considering the aftercare support for family members. Aftercare support for the families is non-existent in certain regions. As a result, the child has been taught new skills but has to continue to function in an unchanging, familial situation. Berg (2012) reported that the programme must be monitored and that follow-up and aftercare strategies need to be in place to ensure programme effectiveness, and that programmes comply with the Minimum Programmes Outcomes Standards.
- The Department should consider assisting youth with food or snacks in order for them to come to the sessions straight after school, without delay and also to participate effectively.
- Support of parents and stakeholders is imperative and can enhance the delivery of service to children. There is a need for training parents and stakeholders so that they can gain knowledge about Diversion programme (*Rhythm of Life*).

Based on the above-mentioned recommendations, it will be vital for the Department of Social Development provincially and nationally to provide support to the implementers of the Diversion programme. This will enable implementers to implement Diversion programmes in a fruitful manner and will lead to the smooth running of the service delivery of Diversion programme. It will also be vital to involve community members and parents of the youth because when one part of a system is affected, the whole system will also be affected hence systems theory.

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## SECTION C: ARTICLE 2

### THE IMPACT OF THE *RHYTHM OF LIFE* DIVERSION PROGRAMME ON YOUTH PARTICIPANTS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE.

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#### **Abstract**

*One purpose of the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) is to divert youth who were found guilty of criminal behaviour, in appropriate cases, away from formal justice procedures. As an alternative to incarceration where youth learn criminal skills from adult offenders, youth committing offences are placed in diversion programmes assumed to provide a platform for preventative and rehabilitative principles to be instilled through skills-training programmes or Victim Offender Mediation programmes. The objectives of diversion programmes are mainly to instill responsible functioning, values and more constructive life skills such as conflict resolution and active decision-making, reintegrating the youth with the family and community, involving victims in the diversion process, as well as preventing stigmatization and the youth from receiving a criminal record. In an attempt to achieve these objectives, youth are subjected to life-skills training that may reduce their criminal tendencies and thinking about criminal activities. The Rhythm of Life is a skill-development programme designed by the Department of Social Development in South Africa with*

*the aim to divert youth in conflict with the law. This programme has been adopted and utilized by different countries.*

*For purposes of the current study, a quantitative study was undertaken to determine the extent to which this programme impacts pro-criminal thinking of youth participants in the North West Province.*

**Keywords:** Impact; Rhythm of Life; Diversion programme; Youth

## INTRODUCTION

Children, and youth particularly, represent vulnerable groups in South Africa and most of them come from the marginalized environments where they are frequently subjected to multiple social conditions such as poverty, family conditions, gang-infested neighborhoods, lack of adequate adult role models, inadequate school and teaching conditions resulting in low achievement rates at school and high levels of victimization (Sloth-Nielsen & Gallinetti, 2011:83). One of the main objectives of the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) is to prevent and limit the exposure of children and youth in conflict with the law, especially first-time offenders, to the possible adverse effects of the formal criminal justice system and court procedures. The aim is to rather divert these youths into diversion programmes where they can learn various pro-social life or vocational skills and thereafter be re-integrated into their communities and families (Badenhorst, 2012, p.4).

One aspect of particular interest in this article concerns the development of pro-criminal attitudes in youth, following exposure to negative elements and influences in the communities' youth grow up in. This phenomenon has been studied extensively in other contexts such as the USA where it is undisputed that youth develop attitudes, beliefs and behaviour that is crime oriented, following their exposure to negative role models in their communities. The youth will attempt to copy bad behaviour instead of a good behaviour. This study is particularly interested in evaluating the impact of a diversion programme, known as the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth respondents in the North West Province. Originally developed by authors such as Walters (2009), *pro-criminal attitudes* are regarded as a major concern for rehabilitative efforts such as diversion programmes. It is believed that these attitudes develop gradually in youth but rapidly increase as more offending behaviour occurs. It is further believed that programmes underpinned by cognitive life-skills training may be reasonably effective and efficient in reducing the likelihood of developing pro-criminal attitudes in youth in conflict with the law.

### **Pro-Criminal Attitudes**

*Pro-Criminal Attitudes* (PCA) refers to the "...specific attitude, value, belief, rationalisation and techniques of neutralisation that imply criminal conduct is acceptable" (Andrews & Bonta 2010, p. 352). Extensive international literature focuses on the role of *Pro-Criminal Attitudes* (PCA) in youth criminal behaviour, programme outcomes and recidivism (Day, Kozar, & Davey, 2013; Guydish, Werdegar, Sorensen, Clark, & Acampora, 1998). The existence of PCA in youth contributes to the likelihood of recidivism occurring; hence PCA must be taken into consideration in a current diversion programmes. The alteration of PCA should be utilised effectively in diversion

programmes in order to modify youth's behaviour towards crime. When such intervention is rendered to youth while they are still developing, it is likely for them to make a positive mind shift. In addition to this it provides an opportunity for further intervention, should it be necessary, while the child is still young and developing.

Ware and Mann (2012) explain that, critical argument revolves around the question as to whether reducing PCAs is unconditionally helpful in preventing crime. In an extensive theoretical analysis, Maruna and Copes (2005) and Maruna and Mann (2006) have argued that "...the common rationale and some of the corresponding interventions used in offender treatment programmes may be active. This theory emphasises that there is a need for offenders to take full responsibility for their actions. For this reason, such behaviours must be confronted instead of minimizing them by shifting the blame or responsibility. In so doing, intervention needs to create opportunities where an offender takes it upon themselves to genuinely reflect on their behaviour as well as whom they are as individuals. This kind of self-concept may be realistic but does not necessarily enhance adjustment. These partially realistic negative self-concepts are typical of people suffering from depression" (Ware & Mann, 2012). This theory implies that most offenders tend to blame others for committing the crime; consequently, they are not assertive enough to stand up for themselves. It is vital for the programme to reduce PCA.

In the review of Banse et al. (2013) it was found that most offender diversion treatment programmes tend to reduce pro-criminal attitudes, but that there is no conclusive evidence that intervention programmes designed to reduce pro-criminal attitudes are effective in reducing recidivism rates. Normally calculated over a year past intervention, recidivism refers to the risk of re-offending within the first three months after intervention. However, the programmes tend to reduce pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law. Unfortunately, the effect size of the impact of intervention programmes on pro-criminal attitudes and recidivism are seldom identified or reported.

Wilson and Hoge (2012) found that, while both diversion programme types played a significant reductionist role in recidivism, the degree of the effectiveness of the programme type moderated by the programme has targeted the risk level of the youth offenders. Among the programmes that targeted low-risk youth, carefulness programmes demonstrated greater efficiency in reducing recidivism than programmes that provide interventions. These programmes of intervention were found to be significantly effective when targeting medium-risk youth rather than low-risk youth. There is a need for differential treatment according to the risk level outlined by Schwalbe et al. (2012). The Diversion programme has been used as the programme that reduces PCA and is discussed below.

## **Diversions in South Africa**

There was a need that the Diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law needs to be evaluated. The Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) prioritises diversion and *Victim Offender Mediation* interventions above other options such as incarceration. A prosecutor may recommend, or may decide, that a child should be diverted after considering the views of the victim and after consultation with the police officer responsible for the investigation of the case (South Africa, Department of Justice & Constitutional Development, 2010, p.17). Firstly, diversion programmes aim to re-socialise and arrange the youth's thinking styles in a manner that he/she accepts the responsibility for their behaviour or charges levelled against them. As second alternative, is that *Victim Offender Mediation* creates an opportunity for the offender to meet the victim in a safe space to help the perpetrator understand the impact of their actions on the victim.

Diversion programmes vary in duration, require either institutionalization for a period or are community based, allowing the youth to stay at home whilst attending the programme during afternoons after school hours. Voluntary participation is an important principle for ensuring the success of a diversion programme, and preparation efforts need to be taken to motivate youth towards participation in cases where motivation is lacking (Badenhorst, 2012). Diversion programmes also adhere to the "risk-responsivity principle" in which the lowest-risk youth should receive the fewest formal interventions and services, and the highest-risk youth should receive the most formal interventions. Too many interventions can actually be harmful and have the effect of increasing deviant attitudes and behaviours (Swayze & Buskovich, 2012). The *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme is a life skills programme; hence both the *Rhythm of Life* programme and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme are discussed below.

### **Life Skills Programmes**

According to the *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014), life skill can be defined as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life-skills training assumes that offending behaviour stems from inadequate skills to react appropriately to particular situations or where the inadequate control of internal impulses hampers pro-social interaction (Steyn, 2010, p.23).

### ***Rhythm of Life***

A prominent life-skills programme introduced by the Department of Social Development is the *Rhythm of Life* programme. According to the *Rhythm of Life* programme manual (2014) the programme was developed as a result of the Department of Social Development's mandate from

the Probation Service Act, 1991 and Chapter 8 and 13 of the Youth's Act, 2005 as Amended, to establish programmes for persons at risk, awaiting trial, sentenced, and for their families. Seen from this perspective, life-skills training programmes such as the *Rhythm of Life* programmes are paramount.

The above discussion outlined different approaches to diversion in South Africa. Life skills programmes tend to have a cognitive behavioural objective, since the aim is to facilitate behavioural change in respondents.

### **The intervention of Rhythm of Life and Victim Offender Mediation Programmes**

*Rhythm of Life* diversion programme is a suitable programme which is regularly presented by the Department of Social Development in the North West Province. It is selected as a programme example in this study. The objective of this programme is to reduce youth's criminal tendencies and for them to reflect on criminal activities. In *Rhythm of Life*, a group of youth in conflict with the law meets in a central venue accredited by the Department of Social Development. The *Victim Offender Mediation* (VOM) programme can however be facilitated in a non-accredited, conducive environment. According to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008, *Victim Offender Mediation* means an informal procedure which is intended to bring together a child who is alleged to have committed an offence and the victim, during which a plan is developed on how a child will redress the effects of the offence. The *Victim Offender Mediation* programme is considered to be the lessor intervention in this study because it lasts two to three weeks. This is a lessor intervention and non-skill oriented because it differs from the *Rhythm of Life* programme. *Victim Offender Mediation* includes both the offender and the victim, while *Rhythm of Life* focuses on the offender. In VOM offenders are granted the opportunity of apologising in contact with a victim. However, in the *Rhythm of Life* programme, offenders are not granted permission to apologise to the victim.

Conventional victim offender mediation aims at achieving apology/forgiveness and a resolution agreeable to both parties (Dhami, 2016). Although this is secondary, offering apology/forgiveness and making an agreement can help offenders in repairing the harms done by the crime committed to the victims. The offenders as well as their family members would set out the changes both parties expect to take place after the mediation. This could include certain rules the offenders need to adhere to, and the changes that the offenders would like them to take place with their parents. Another aspect similar to the conventional *Victim Offender Mediation* is the emphasis on victim empathy. Victim empathy is encouraged in restorative dialogues because it promotes healing (Lummer & Hagemann, 2015). Furthermore, limited evidence exists those

points to the possibility that victim empathy helps to reduce recidivism (Gottschall, Greiner, Brown, & Serin, 2015).

The *Rhythm of Life* programme was chosen as the test programme as it is a suitable diversion programme regularly presented by the Department of Social Development in the North West Province; consequently, it needs to be evaluated. These programmes focus on life skills programme; hence making the Diversion programmes. The PCA play an important role in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of youth in conflict with the law. It assists youth with their actions and criminal thinking towards crime because the programmes are good at implementing good behaviour.

### **THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Consistent with the research problem being investigated, namely the lack of local evaluative studies on the effectiveness of youth diversion programmes, the researcher realised that there is a need to evaluate the impact of the Diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law in the North West Province. According to Van Biljon and Rousseau (2010), South Africa, due to its socio-economic circumstances, it is faced with and the challenge of large numbers of youth guilty of or at risk of committing offences. Youth tend to commit crime due to their pro-criminal thinking and lack of information on the criminal activities and behaviour.

There is a need for diversion programmes to be evaluated regarding its effectiveness in bringing about changes in youth's criminal thinking and reducing the recurrence of offending as a result of behavioural problems of youth in the community. Through evaluation processes, necessary adjustments can be made to programme contents, the programme's underlying change logic or the effectiveness of delivery mechanisms, should a need arise. Briefly, there is also a need for evaluation studies on diversion programmes, specifically concerning their immediate impact on behavioural change, and attitude towards offending and crime in general. Life-skills achievement appears to be an important aspect of evaluation. This is the research problem for this intended study, and a study focusing on diversion programme effectiveness is regarded necessary to determine (a) whether a youth diversion programme is able to reduce pro-criminal attitudes in youth respondents, and b) whether potential links exist between immediate impacts in terms of PCA and longer-term (Three-month post-intervention) recidivism.

#### **The research question for this article is as follows:**

What is the direct impact of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on the PCA of participating youth? This question examines the immediate and short-term impact of the selected

programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of participating youth in the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme, and justifies an empirical, experimental research phase. The question is based on the effectiveness of or the role played by diversion programme on the PCA of youth.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the impact of the diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of youth in conflict with the law. In order to achieve the afore-mentioned aim the following objective was to evaluate the short-term impact of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme on PCA by means of an empirical study using a group of youth in conflict with the law obtained from programme delivery sites in the North West Province.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The researcher opted for a combined quantitative/qualitative or mixed-method approach in which a quasi-experimental, one-group pre- and post-test design with a comparison group is used (Strydom, 2011). A quasi-experimental design is selected because the researcher is not in a position to use random sampling or allocation of participants to either an experimental or a comparison group, as this is not practically feasible within this project. According to De Vos et al. (2012, p.149) the requirement that the quasi-experimental designs lack most frequently, is the random assignment of research participants to two or more groups. It usually enables to draw conclusions with regard to causal relationships with less conviction than in true experimental research. Although the quasi-experimental design is weaker than an RCT, it is still able to provide worthwhile, practical results. The quasi-experimental design is less likely to disturb or negatively influence respondents due to waiting lists or exclusions from an intervention. Both the RCT and the quasi-experimental design are experimental study designs, but in the case of a quasi-experimental study, there was less control over the random allocation of respondents in either an experimental or a comparison group. This study is considered a partial evaluation as it did not focus on the multiple issues commonly associated with large-scale evaluation studies (Schwalbe, Gearing, Mackenzie, Brewer, & Ibrahim, 2012).

The comparison group was utilised, composed of similarly aged youth, carefully selected, who were subjected to the same battery of tests the experimental group was subjected to. A comparison group was obtained from youth responding in a lesser intervention or minimal intervention group (De Vos, 2011, Bryman, 2012). Since the programme does not contain structured learning, and is of shorter duration, it was purposes of this study, regarded as a lessor intervention.

The population for this study consisted of both first-time and repeat youth offenders who were referred by the court to attend a diversion programme. The design for this study thus is a *Non-equivalent Comparison Groups Design* (Rubin & Babbie, 2016, p.244). In this case the researcher controlled for lack of internal validity by comparing the two groups on a range of demographic variables such as age, gender, school grade, geographical location, offence type, number of prior offences and family composition variables such as family size, parental marital status and whether or not the child lives with the family. This formed the basis for comparison, and during selection attempts made to ensure that both groups were of equal composition. However, since the nature of the interventions differed, and designed for respondents with different backgrounds, the samples drawn for this study differed significantly in terms of age.

Even though this diversion programme is implemented within nine different provinces in South Africa, the focus was singularly on the North West Province for purposes of this study. These three service points (Tswaing, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa) were selected purposively in the North West Province because they represent a rural farming context whilst youth from these areas are more likely to re-offend according to DSD caseload figures of 321 children. This differs from the urban setting because children from urban area are less likely to commit crime due to the information they receive from schools regarding crime. The study by Wright, Kim, Chassin, Losoya and Piquero (2014) found ecological factors such as poverty to be significantly associated with adolescent anti-social behaviour and offending. The afore-mentioned factors were regarded as important and considered them to perhaps have an impact on the youth's behaviour and attitudes towards criminal mentality. The focus was on both the *Rhythm of Life* programme and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. For this reason, the experimental design was utilized to evaluate *Rhythm of Life* and comparison design to evaluate the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. In conclusion, *Rhythm of Life* and VOM differ with regard to goals, objectives and implementation. However, both are diversion programmes. Below, the sampling strategy implemented during the research process is explained.

### **Sampling strategy**

#### **Population and sampling**

The population of this study comprised both male and female offenders between ages 14 and 17 years in the North West Province and who were referred by court to the Department of Social Development to attend the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme in the North West Province. The total number of youth in conflict with the law referred by court in 2018 was 321. The youth who were on a waiting list were selectet at the selected service points during March 2018 seeing that this would give them a reasonable number to achieve the indicated sample size.

Sampling was purposive as it was not possible to target the entire population. Three sites were selected where the ROL programme and VOM programme were presented in parallel. These service points are in Ngaka Molema District, Ramotshere Moloa, Ratlou and Tswaing service points. Sampling was conducted by utilizing enrolment figures for the two programmes.

Due to low enrolment numbers, the sample size of 22 respondents of experimental group agreed to respond in the study. Two respondents were lost to attribution as they withdrew from the programme before completion of the post-test. A further 23 youth participated in the comparison group of whom four withdrew due to attrition. The total number of the children participated is 39. Youth allocated to the ROL programme are first-time offenders or at-risk youth, and VOM recruits are first or multiple offenders.

### **ETHICAL ASPECTS**

The study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty of Health of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (NWU 00019-18-S1) (Annexure A). To be able to conduct the study, the ethical approval was also obtained from the North West Department of Social Development before commencement of the study (Annexure B). The researcher took into consideration the importance of adherence to ethical requirements. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents could withdraw at any time should they have wished to do so. Respondents signed informed consent forms (Annexure C) prior to the commencement of the group and they were made fully aware of what the study entailed and what was expected from them. Informed consent is an essential condition for research study (Strydom, 2011, p.119). Written informed consent implies that all possible information that will be gathered or sufficient information regarding the goal of the research, the procedures that will be utilised during the study including the possible advantages, and disadvantages and dangers that the respondents could be exposed to, need to be furnished to all potential respondents (Rubin & Babbie, 2014, p.77).

The respondents were informed that all information gathered during research was dealt with confidentially and privately. Privacy indicates personal privacy, while confidentiality is indicative of information being dealt with in a confidential manner. Information concerning the respondents was obtained in a confidential manner so that respondents could not be identified at a later stage (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

### **Data collection**

Data was collected at three Service Points in different communities. A sample of 22 participants agreed to participate in the study. Two participants were lost to attrition as they

withdrew from the programme before completion of the post-test. A further 23 youth responded in the comparison group of whom four withdrew due to attrition. The recruitment of respondents in both *Rhythm of Life* and *VOM* was performed at three service points.

## **Instrumentation**

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire consisting of a demographic data section, and a section on the three constructs of measurement selected for this study. The following measures were used:

### **Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS) scale**

Walters (1998) highlighted that criminal thinking is not a personality style or trait, but a series of interactions with the social environment that would normally concern professionals working from the lifestyle perspective. Criminal thinking is hierarchical in nature, with general criminal thinking at the highest level, proactive or reactive thinking at the middle level of the hierarchy and seven of the eight thinking style scales (Mo, En, Po, and So loading onto P and Co, Ci, and Ds loading onto R) at the lower level of the hierarchy. According to this model, criminal thinking may differ from the higher level to the lower level, suggesting different forms of criminal thinking. A person's lifestyle is supported by a range of factors such as "conditioning, reinforcement, stress reduction, environmental enabling, and fear of change, psychological inertia, and cognition" (Walters – PICTS manual, p.5). Walters (1990) indicated that for youth who are likely to engage in criminal behaviour, their actions often are influenced by their belief system and as a result make it difficult for such a child to correctly interpret or respond to societal corrective teachings. This notion forms part of the Lifestyle theory (Walters, 1990). Walters (1990) argues that "...the criminal lifestyle theory canters around three key variables: conditions, choice and cognition. Conditions refer to external or internal aspects that can influence a person to commit crime". The environment as an external factor can play a role in personal decision in life. However, the choices of a person to make a specific decision depends on his/her circumstances. Actions and decisions that receive negative feedback are withdrawn and decisions and actions leading to positive feedback are reinforced. Some people choose positive decision while others choose negative decision; hence it depends on the individual. Over time an individual develops a system of cognitions designed to justify and rationalize his or her actions and decisions.

Walters (2009) explains that lifestyle theory proposes that a criminal lifestyle is composed of two overlapping dimensions which are *proactive criminality* and *reactive criminality*. Proactive criminality refers to dimensions that require active criminal thinking and behaviour, while reactive criminality is those behaviours that result in reactions to situations as a result of one's sensitivity.

Another inconsistency that has helped shape the lifestyle theory of crime is whether individual differences in criminality are unconditional.

The *Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles* (PICTS) were used for measuring the Pro-criminal attitude of youth (Walters, 2002; Walters, 2016; Walters, & Geyer, 2005). The PICTS was developed in 1979 and subsequently validated in multiple studies in different countries. The PICTS (Walters, 1995) is an 80-item self-report measure designed to assess criminal thought process. For purposes of this study, the researcher relied on the 2013 PICTS manual, offering a description of the PICTS: V4.0 (Walters, 2013). According to this Manual the scale was designed to measure *eight thinking styles* hypothesized by the authors to support an offending type of lifestyle.

The eight thinking styles are measured by means of different 8-item thinking style scales, *Mollification (Mo)*, *Cut-off (Co)*, *Entitlement (En)*, *Power Orientation (Po)*, *Sentimentality (Sn)*, *Superoptimism (So)*, *Cognitive Indolence (Ci)*, and *Discontinuity (Ds)*. These dimensions are an operationalization of theoretical concepts relevant to Walters' theory regarding criminal thinking. This theory is the Criminal Lifestyle theory. The criminal lifestyle (Walters, 1990) develops from interactions taking place between the three connected variables, namely conditions, choice, and cognition. Conditions refer to internal or external variables that influence the actions and acts of a person. A person makes choices in life and it can be positive or negative choices. According to lifestyle theory, conditions do not directly cause criminal behaviour. However, they increase or decrease individuals' options in their life. Different dimensions were looked into in order to assess criminal thought process, such as criminal thinking of youth in conflict with the law. They also assist children in knowing and understanding the things that lead them to commit crime.

### **The eight thinking style Scales**

1. **Mo** = Mollification – or the self-justification of one's actions by projecting blame onto the environment. Offenders scoring high on this dimension will thus be likely to blame anybody or anything other than themselves for their offences
2. **Co** = Cut-off is the rapid elimination of deterrents to crime by a casual sweep under the carpet. The term "fuck-it" appears to be frequently used in these instances. Those with high scorers on this dimension are likely to be casual about what they have done. Cut-off can be reduced by helping respondents to develop skills such as patience, tolerance and emotional control.
3. **En** = Entitlement is the tendency of a person to justify criminal behaviour by stating their entitlement to do such actions. They will also make mistake that wants for needs and thereby justify unlawful actions. This dimension is related to more boisterous self-justification.

According to Walters (2009, p.44) the Entitlement (En) scale reflects a sense of ownership, privilege and uniqueness that is applied by the individual to grant him- or herself permission to violate the laws of society and the rights of others. Entitlement can perhaps best be challenged by suggesting the creation of a personal inventory of values and expectancies and helping clients distinguish between wants and needs.

4. **Po** = Power orientation – Is concerned with individual developing abilities to be in charge of their inner being such as emotional and psychological control. This in turn will help them to be able to weight and take responsibility for the impact environmental factors are likely to have on them.
5. **Sn** = Sentimentality means doing something nice for others to feel better about yourselves. Youth like to please others in order for them to feel better.
6. **So** = Super optimism is the unrealistic belief that when you see what happens to people committing crime, you will think that it will not happen to you;
7. **Ci** = Cognitive indolence reflects shortcut thinking, taking the shortest possible route, no matter what. Walters (2009, p 45) explains that the Cognitive Indolence (Ci) scale assesses the tendency to take short-cuts and look for the easy way around problems. Such individuals are often enmeshed in controversy because their short-cuts invariably get them into trouble with those to whom they are accountable (supervisor, parent, and spouse). Respondants scoring high on the Ci scale are frequently described as lazy, unmotivated, and irresponsible. Cognitive indolence can be assailed by developing and reinforcing the client's critical reasoning skills. Ci decreased in both experimental and comparison groups from pre-test and post-test, indicating that both programmes succeeded in lowering lack of responsibility and in increasing critical reasoning skills.
8. **Ds** = Discontinuity is the lack of consistency in thought and action and an inability to follow through on initially good intentions (Walters, 2009). The experimental group scored higher than the comparison group in this dimension.

Furthermore, the researcher opted to develop a score for the **Fear-of-Change** (FOC) scale, indicating the extent to which a person fears change and tends to stick to established ways. Fear of Change (FOC) – Fear of change measures the tendency in offenders to resist change due to their negative criminal tendencies as indicated above. Less fear of change is an indicator of willingness to make amends and develop a positive, constructive personality following recognition of own offending. It was observed that the comparison group demonstrated more profound fear of change than the experimental group.

### **Other sub-scales derived from V4.0 are:**

**Cf-r** = revised Confusion scale; **Df-r** = revised Defensiveness scale,

**GCT** = General Criminal Thinking.

### **Four Factor scales**

Problem Avoidance scale (**PRB**); Infrequency scale (**INF**); Self-assertion/Deception scale (**AST**); (**DNH**) = Denial of Harm scale

According to Walters (2009, p 54) the Denial of Harm (DNH) factor scale, despite being the fourth factor identified in the original factor analysis and explaining the least amount of variance on the PICTS, may have a reasonable degree of clinical and research utility. Not surprisingly, two of the DNH scale's strongest correlates are the Mollification (Mo) and Sentimentality (Sn) thinking style scales.

### **Two general content scales**

**CUR**= Current Criminal Thinking Scale; **HIS** = Historical Criminal Thinking Scale. Walters (2013) asserts that Current Criminal Thinking (CUR) is a scale that represents the current identification with a criminal belief system. It is also the single best measure of change that is obtainable on the PICTS. The Historical Criminal Thinking (HIS) scale establishes past identification with a criminal belief system and may or may not entail current identification with a criminal lifestyle. The Historical scale is the single best correlate criminal involvement of the past, also one of the most scales that are temporally stable on the PICTS. Both the CUR and the HIS are elevations on the PICTS; the higher the score the more the explanatory reports completed in this section apply.

The above dimensions of the scale are only used during analysis and provide different dimensions – either of criminal thinking, measured individually or as part of a larger aggregate scale.

### **Level 2 Higher-order scales**

**P** = Proactive Criminal Thinking scale (Mo, En, Po, So); this is planned, cold-blooded and goal-directed criminal thinking

**R** = Reactive Criminal Thinking scale (Co, Ci, Dis); this is spontaneous, hot-blooded and impetuous thinking and acting.

The above explain the higher-order scales (Proactive Criminal Thinking scale and Reactive Criminal Thinking) with their sums. The P and R comprise a relatively large number of items that are more stable and reliable than the thinking style, factor, content, and special scales. They are also helpful in defining and positioning the criminal thinking of the respondents by identifying the arrangement of criminal thinking towards the individual contribution (Walters & Schlauch, 2008).

Each PICTS item is rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = disagree, 2 = uncertain, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree), and scores are derived by summing item responses for all items contributing to a particular scale. This implies that high scores indicate more of the attribute and low scores indicate less of the attribute. Reliability analysis for the PICTS scales indicates mean alphas in the range of .61 – .94 for males and .54 – .93 for females. Mean inter-item correlations range from .11 to .39 for females and .17 to .36 for males. The entire scale thus has sufficient moderate to high internal consistency. Two-week stability in test-retest reliability exceeds .70 in both gender groups over twelve weeks is above .50. Concurrent validity was established for the scale using prior offending data and alternative measures. Generally, correlations with these dimensions seem moderate to strong. Construct validity was established by means of Factor Analysis, and average inter-correlations of .50 were obtained.

Barnett et al. (2012) reported that almost all PCA and other risk factor scales correlated positively with an impression management scale (without reporting the size of these correlations). This finding could indicate that offenders with a high motive for social approval (high social desirability/impression management scores) tend to admit higher PCAs. These findings suggest that it may be worth exploring whether treatment and traits such as impression management moderate measures of PCA and other risk factors in a way that blurs the overall positive correlation with recidivism. “For example, due to successful treatment some offenders may honestly report lower PCA scores, and others could cease to deliberately fake good, resulting in an apparent increase of PCAs.” (Day, Kozar, & Davey, 2013; Guydish, Werdegar, Sorensen, Clark, & Acampora, 1998.) This study does not utilize an impression management scale as this was optional and assessed to be of little with a youth sample.

The Peer Deviancy Scale (PDS) and Service Perception Index (SPI) scale were utilized as second instrument. Both scales are explained below.

### **Peer Deviancy Scale**

The second instrument utilized in this study was the Peer Deviancy Scale that measures youth’s friendship relations including a child’s social behaviour by means of the delinquent

behaviour. This scale consists of 10 items arranged in a single dimension (Multisite Violence Prevention Project, 2004). Firstly, respondents were requested to indicate how many friends they would consider to be their close friends. Secondly, since the scale intended to measure youth's reports of friends' involvement in various delinquent activities, they were then presented with 10 problem behaviours and asked to indicate how many of their friends have presented these behaviours in the past 3 months. The youth respondents were asked questions such as how many of these friends would be considered close to them and at what frequency these friends are seen. The Peer Deviancy Scale consists of six questions. The Reliability of this scale was investigated for the overall scale, and Alpha established at 0.838. The current study utilized all items of the scale for measuring respondents' peer involvement. Hence this instrument does not require psychometric interpretation, and summing the scores provides a continuous score suitable for analysis. The Service Perception Index was applied, which is discussed below.

### **The Service Perception Index (SPI)**

The Service Perceptions Index (SPI) is a scale developed by Roestenburg and Oliphant (2008) for measuring youth's perceptions regarding the diversion programme they had attended, and its effectiveness as seen from their perspective. The main rationale for using this scale was to establish the respondent's satisfaction with regard to the court process during the initial phase of intervention and the services associated with the programme attended. The scale poses questions concerning the child's perceptions of the court- and probation process rendered to him/her, to which he/she needs to provide answers on a service perception index questionnaire. This scale also verifies the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of youth concerning services they had received from all stakeholders involved in the process.

The Service Perceptions Index (SPI) is a dedicated instrument that was partially validated in Roestenburg and Oliphant's research on youth in conflict with the law (Roestenburg & Oliphant, 2008, p 108). The scale contains 11 items that were derived by applying Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and poses questions specifically related to perceptions of the pre-trial assessment and court process directly preceding the attendance of a diversion programme. The scale is positively formulated in that the 11 items reflect positive experiences of the court and sentencing process. Aspects being measured are: Helpfulness of personnel, freedom to discuss issues openly, extent of information obtained, dealings with the social worker, appropriateness of sentence, level of understanding during process, clarity of questions and general satisfaction with the process. The scale uses a five-point Likert scale on which higher scores indicate more positive perceptions. With this scale we examined the hypothesis that high satisfaction scores may correlate with high PICTS scores. The value of this instrument is to determine whether child respondent perceptions in this study were influenced by their overall experience of the service.

This scale can be regarded as a positively phrased scale in that higher scores represent more optimistic perceptions of the diversion experience. The measure was tested on 309 youth respondents who were in diversion programmes at the time of the study. The measure uses a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree and 5 strongly agree). The SPI was administered once on both the experimental and comparison group at Time 2, the first Post-test. (Roestenburg et al., 2008:108). Since this scale measures post-intervention perceptions regarding diversion programme attended, this instrument will only be used for post-testing purposes.

Reliability analysis of the overall scale showed that all 11 items can be used whilst their Alpha = 0.783.

### **Data collection procedures**

Data were collected at the three service points where the ROL was presented, and where respondents in the lesser VOM intervention attended. Respondents who expressed interest in response to recruitment were interviewed and explained the details of the project. After signing informed consent, respondents were prepared for responding in the research. In the case of minor youth, both the parents and the child signed the informed consent forms. Baseline data collection at Time 1, pre-test collected at the first session of the Intervention and data for the post-test were collected at the end of the eight-week intervention. Respondents completed the questionnaires in the privacy of an office on-site.

### **Data analysis**

Data obtained in the study were converted into electronic form by entering these into IBM SPSS Ver. 24, directly from the questionnaires. The data was analysed by statistical consultants of North-West University in accordance with the following data analysis plan:

1. First, a descriptive analysis of key demographic variables was conducted to understand the characteristics of the sample. Cross-tabulations and Pearson's Chi-square were used to examine equality of the two groups. We report P value only for completeness but will report and discuss the Cramer's V. Effect sizes of 0,1 were regarded as a very small effect, 0,3 as medium effect and 0,5 and greater as a large effect.
2. We conducted a comparative analysis of certain family characteristics by means of cross-tabulations and Pearson Chi-Square.
3. Scale reliability was then established by means of Cronbach's Alpha. Due to small numbers no factor analysis could be conducted.

4. A comparative analysis was conducted with Age as independent variable to establish any differences with regard to the two groups and the PICTS dimensions. This enabled to confirm a baseline at the start of the programme.
5. A comparison analysis between various pre- and post-test scores for both groups was conducted. Two hypotheses were evaluated: (a) whether the *Rhythm of Life (ROL)* programme had a significant impact on respondents' Pro-Criminal Attitudes of the experimental group from T1 to T2; and (b) whether the *Victim Offender Mediation (VOM)* programme had a significant impact on respondents in this group from T1 – T2.
6. Comparison between experimental and comparison group scores. The hypothesis that was tested concerns: (a) whether there was a significant difference between experimental and comparison group pre-test scores; and (b) whether a significant difference existed between the experimental and comparison group at Post-test 2. Analysis consisted of Students' T-test for paired samples.
7. To examine the effect of testing as a covariate confounding possible effects, a covariance analysis was conducted by means of ANCOVA, to remove the effect of testing from the analysis (Pallant, 2011). This procedure was followed by a one-way ANOVA analysis. The question investigated: *Was there a significant difference in the PICTS and PDA scores for respondents in the ROL experimental group and respondents in the VOM group, while controlling for their scores on these tests at Time 1?*
8. The significance of difference was evaluated at 95% confidence level.

## **FINDINGS**

Bellow is the report on the results of each group separately.

### **DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

#### **Age**

Members of the experimental group were on average two years older than the comparison group and this was significantly older than respondents in the comparison group ( $M_{Exp} = 16.48$   $SD = 0.602$ ,  $M_{Comp} = 14,8$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ). More variation occurred in the comparison group with regard to age.

#### **Gender**

The following Table presents the gender distribution in the sample, using the experimental and comparison group's data at the start of the programme.

**Table 4-1**  
**Gender comparison in study**

<b>Crosstab</b>			<b>GENDER</b>		<b>Total</b>
			<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
<b>PRE-Test</b>	Experimental	Count	17 <sub>a</sub>	4 <sub>a</sub>	21
		% within PRE-test	81,0%	19,0%	100,0%
	Comparison group	Count	18 <sub>a</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	18
		% within PRE-test	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
<b>Total</b>		Count	35	4	39
		% within PRE-test	89,7%	10,3%	100,0%

**Each subscript letter denotes a subset of GENDER categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from one another at the .05 level.**

Approximately 81% of the experimental group consisted of males and 19% were females. This indicates that the ratio of males is more than that of females. All the respondents in the comparison group were male. There were four females in the experimental group. Therefore, any forthcoming results predominantly reflect male opinions.

**School grade at time of offence**

**Table 4-2**  
**Grade at time of offence**

<b>Crosstab</b>			<b>SCHOOL</b>			<b>Total</b>
			<b>Not-schooling</b>	<b>Grade 5-7</b>	<b>Grade 8-10</b>	
<b>PRE-Test</b>	experimental	Count	0 <sub>a, b</sub>	3 <sub>b</sub>	18 <sub>a</sub>	21
		% within PRE-test	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
	comparison	Count	1 <sub>a, b</sub>	10 <sub>b</sub>	7 <sub>a</sub>	18
		% within PRE-test	5.6%	55.6%	38.9%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>		Count	1	13	25	39
		% within PRE-test	2.6%	33.3%	64.1%	100.0%

**Each subscript letter denotes a subset of SCHOOL categories of which column proportions do not differ significantly from one another at the .05 level.**

Educational levels for the two groups differed significantly as indicated in the Table above, X<sup>2</sup> (2 N = 39) = 9.434, p = 0.009. 85% of experimental group of participants were in Grades 8-10, compared to 55% of the comparison group being in Grades 5-7 and 33% in Grades 8-10. Most respondents in the experimental group therefore were in a higher grade than those in the

comparison group, where respondents tended to be younger and in a lower grade. The effect of this difference is considered in further analysis.

**Was the child still in school at the time of the study?**

**Table 4-3**  
**Current schooling status of child**

<b>Crosstab</b>			<b>Current school level</b>		<b>Total</b>
			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>PRE-test</b>	Experimental	Count	17 <sub>a</sub>	4 <sub>a</sub>	21
		% within PREA	81.0%	19.0%	100.0%
	Comparison	Count	18 <sub>a</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	18
		% within PREA	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>		Count	35	4	39
		% within PREA	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%

**Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Q4 categories of which column proportions do not differ significantly from one another at the .05 level.**

The majority of the respondents in the experimental group (19%) did not attend school at the time of the study. In contrast, all the respondents in the comparison group attended school. In comparison an effect size 0.313 indicated that school attendance differed significantly between the two groups. The respondents in the experimental group were less likely school attenders.

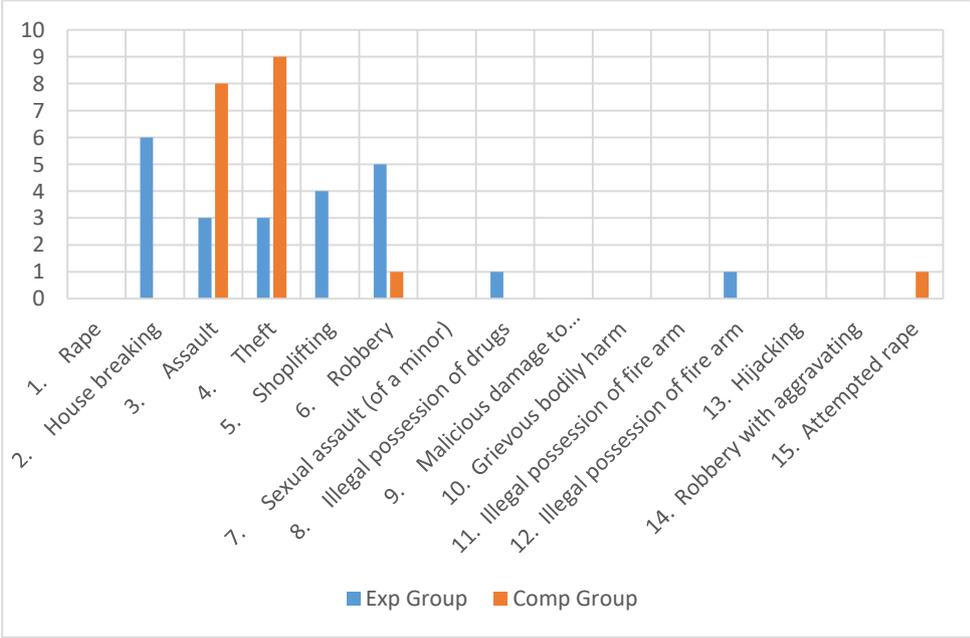
**Village/extension/area of residence.**

Although 71% of experimental group respondents came from Service Point 1 and 61% of the comparison group from Service Point 2, and only 10% from Service point 3, the difference in numbers is not significant or of practical relevance. The researcher did not for purposes of this study attempt to examine differences between service points.

**Type of offence**

The following graph provides information on the offence status of respondents regarding both groups.

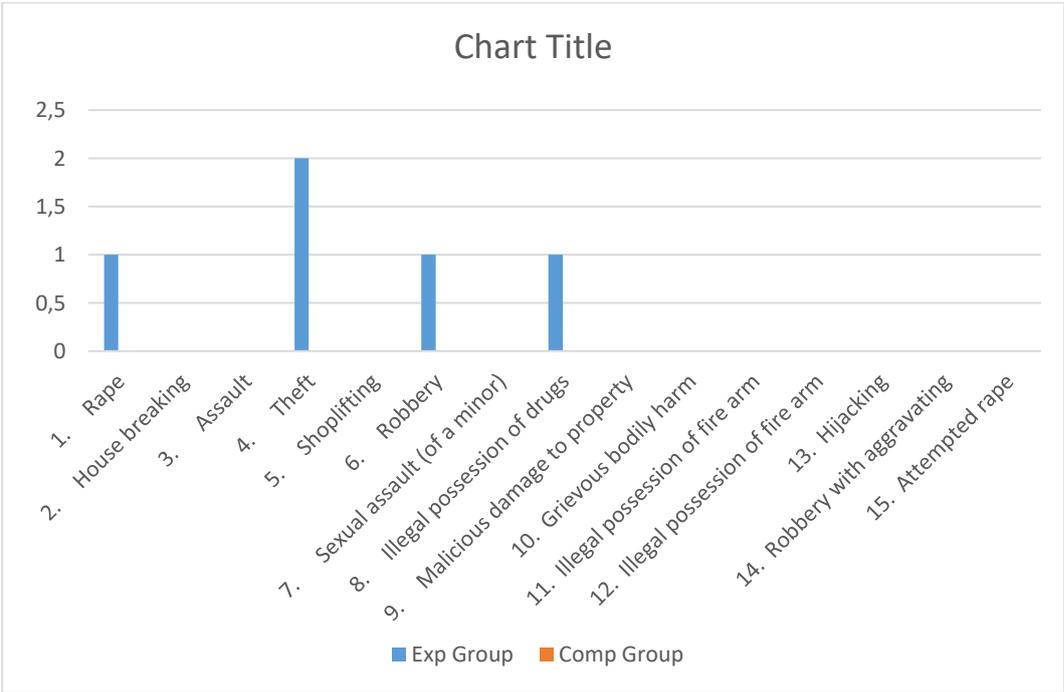
**Current offence**



**Figure 4-1 Offence pattern for current offences in both groups**

Visually, note that the experimental group mostly committed housebreaking, assault, theft shoplifting and robbery offences, whilst comparison group members mostly committed assault, theft and robbery. Deviations were for attempted rape in the comparison group and drugs and firearms for the experimental group.

**Previous offence**



**Figure 4-2 Previous offence patterns for both groups**

Note that a few respondents in the experimental group had committed previous offences, specifically rape, theft, robbery and drugs, whilst the comparison group did not present with prior offences.

In summary, the experimental group had committed more and serious current offences as opposed to the comparison group. The experimental group was also more likely to have a previous offence record whereas the comparison group consisted of first-time offenders. The table shows that the experimental group is more experienced in offending compared to the comparison group that is not well-informed about serious crime. This has implications for implementing the programmes, because the experimental group is more experienced, more educated and likely to have offended prior to the programme. This may influence their likelihood to re-offend in future and it may be more difficult to change their Criminal thinking styles by means of an intervention such as a life-skills training programme. For purposes of further analysis, the two groups are not regarded equal and this may influence the results and the interpretation thereof.

**Number of previous offences**

A small difference was observed. The comparison group had not been charged with previous offences, whilst the experimental group had been charged with previous offences.

## **FAMILY FACTORS:**

In this section, the experimental and comparison group were compared against several family factors.

### **Place of residence**

No significant differences that were observed regarding the place respondents lived at. The majority of the respondents in both groups lived with their parents (61%), whereas about 36% lived with relatives. Only one respondent lived elsewhere. It is thus concluded that both groups came from the same communities and were from the same population.

### **Who the youth live with**

Although observable differences occurred between the groups regarding the person they were likely to live with, this difference was not found to be significant. Medium effect sizes were however observed in these cases. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the experimental group lived with their mothers and 19% with their grandparents at the time of the study. In the comparison group a larger group (39%) lived with their grandparents and 56% with their mothers. The effect size in this instance is  $V = 0.403$

### **Size of the family**

Significant differences were observed for family size. Higher scores were obtained overall in cases of large families with more than five members. The Cramer's V returned a large effect at 0.5.

In the experimental group, respondents tended to live in smaller families with less than five members in contrast to the comparison group where families had more members. Family size contributed to family wellbeing as observed by Roestenburg (1999) who found that medium-sized families were more likely to fulfil support needs of its individual members, whereas larger families were more detrimental to overall family well-being.

### **Employment situation of breadwinner**

80% of the breadwinners from the experimental group were employed in contrast to 34% of the comparison group. This indicates that families from the experimental group could be financially more stable than was the case in the comparison group.

### **Does the child currently present with behaviour problems?**

No difference was found between the two groups.

### **Number of visits/consultations with Social Worker**

For the comparison group, 82.4% indicated having visited the social worker once prior to the attendance of the programme, and in the experimental group most youth indicated having visited the social worker more frequently (two-four visits). It is therefore concluded that less contact existed between the social worker and the client in the case of the comparison group.

### **Conclusion**

It thus appears that with respect to the above demographical variables there were some important differences between the two groups to take note of. Firstly, it is possible that the well-being of families in the case of the experimental group was more positive as respondents in this case came from medium-sized families where parents were employed whilst comparison group respondents were living in single-parented families. Family conditions in the comparison group appeared less favourable as a larger percentage of respondents lived with grandparents, and living conditions appeared less favourable as well. This trend corresponds with the findings of Roestenburg and Oliphant (2008, p 88) who found that offending youth were likely to live with their families of origin and were not homeless as was assumed. It is of concern though that in the case of the comparison group a larger proportion of youth tended to live with grandparents only and unemployment seemed more likely in these cases.

It is notable that youth in the experimental group were more likely engaged in being interviewed by social workers at the time of commencement of the programme. Hence they were already receiving preparation and some form of intervention by the time they started the programme.

## **RELIABILITY ANALYSIS**

This section provides information regarding the reliability of the different scale dimensions as used in this study. Scale validity was not assessed in this study due to low sampling numbers. Reliability was established by means of Cronbach's Alpha, with 0.6 being the general standard for acceptance. Due to the small sample size the complete scales could not be used as is. Item-total correlations were used to identify and consider removal of distracting items. In this manner scales were systematically refined to increase their Alpha levels. Table 1 provides the information regarding this. The results show that all dimensions of the PICTS scales represented in the following Table reflect reasonable reliability levels, with items that did not contribute to the scale

removed. The scale dimensions as indicated here were used for further analysis. The Table further illustrates the different scale dimensions.

**Table 4-4**  
**Reliabilities for PICTS dimensions**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Measurement construct</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Items removed</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
1	<b>Mo</b> Mollification	B2, B8, B14, B71	B17, B14, B53, B35 and B45	0.531
2	<b>En</b> Entitlement	B1, B12, B28, B33, B38, B73, B80	B65	0.594
3	<b>Po</b> Power Orientation	B9, B18, B24, B34, B41, B49, B66, B75	-	0.711
4	<b>So</b> Superoptimism	B5, B13, B22, B29, B44, B52, B61, B76	-	0.721
5	<b>Ci</b> Cognitive Indolence	B16, B23, B43, B51, B54, B63, B74	B30	0.688
6	<b>Co</b> Cut-off	B20, B31, B40, B57, B64, B70, B79	B6	0.607
7	<b>Ds</b> Discontinuity	B4, B26, B36, B47, B59, B62, B68, B78	-	0.755
8	<b>Sn</b> Sentimentality	B15, B19, B25, B37, B50, B67, B77	B56	0.540
9	<b>P</b> Proactive Criminal Thinking	Mo, Pn, Po, So		0.788
10	<b>R</b> Reactive Criminal Thinking	Co, Ci, Ds		0.840
11	<b>GCT</b> General Criminal Thinking Scale	Mo, Co, En, Po, So, Ci, Ds		0.895
12	<b>FOC</b> Fear-of-Change Scale	B42, B46, B48, B55, B69	B21	0.654
13	<b>Cf-r</b> Confusion Revised Scale	B6r, B10, B16r, B20r, B32, B58, B59r, B72		0.661
14	<b>Df-r</b> Defensiveness revised scale	PO27, PO39, PO47, PO49, PO60, PO62, PO64		
10	<b>CUR</b> Current Criminal Thinking	B4, B16, B23, B26, B36, B40, B43, B51, B62, B64, B68, B70, B79		0.806
11	<b>HIS</b> Historical Criminal Thinking	B13, B15, B33, B35, B38, B44, B61, B73, B74, B76, B78, B80		0.762
12	<b>PRB</b> Problem Avoidance	B4, B6, B26, B36, B43, B51, B62, B68, B79	B30	0.789

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Measurement construct</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Items removed</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>INF</b> Infrequency	B12, B27, B28, B37, B41 B45, B49, B52 B57, B60		0.745
<b>14</b>	<b>AST</b> Self-Assertion/Deception	B13, B14, B31, B33, B35 B38, B44, B73 B76, B78		0.666
<b>15</b>	<b>DNH</b> Denial of Harm	B17, B22, B25, B29, B56 B63, B65, B66, B77	B5	0.708

The table above enabled to proceed with analysis, although was unable to utilize the scale in its original format. It was therefore not possible to use the software for score calculation, although the developers of the PICTS scale provided the researcher with this software. The researcher therefore opted to rather work with scale average scores as this would facilitate clearer analysis and enabled us to use the scales even though some items were removed. The researcher took cognisance of the direction of interpretation for each sub-scale as this could influence the accuracy of interpretation. In this regard, the general conclusion drawn is that the higher the score obtained, the more of the attribute was present.

Several hypotheses were tested by means of the instruments used in the study, and this mainly concerned Pre-test, Post-test comparisons, Experimental and comparison groups and explaining the empirical validity of findings by excluding the effect of the Pre-test as a confounding variable. The reader should note that significance values greater than 0, 05 were included, whilst the analysis focused more on effect sizes than significance. Ample material will confirm that effect sizes are more reliable to interpret.

### **BETWEEN-GROUPS COMPARISON**

In the following section the experimental group was compared with the comparison group to test the hypothesis that differences occurred between the two groups on all the variables. For this purpose, paired T-tests were used because there were two groups (2 Ph value for each variable). Results are presented in pairs, with a 2 indicating the second or post-test result. Note that results may not necessarily be significant, but inclusion of items was based on effect sizes greater than 0,3, interpreted as large effect sizes.

**Table 4-5**  
**Pre-test and post-test group comparison**

		<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Effect size</b>
<b>EXPERIMENTAL</b>	En	2.5635	21	0.48896		0.42

		Mean	N	SD	p	Effect size
<b>COMPARISON</b>	En2	2.3605	21	0.53188		
	HIS	2.4322	21	0.53235		0.36
	HIS2	2.2421	21	0.59913		
	Peer	1.4820	21	0.79732		0.55
	Peer2	1.0444	21	0.81208		
	Peer	1.04	17	0.82253		0.45
	Peer2	1.41	17	1.05158		
	FRIENDS	6.76	17	6.078		0.47
	POFR	3.88	17	2.643		
	Ci	2.56	18	0.62152		0.43
	Ci2	2.29	18	0.43784		
	INF	2.13	18	0.62761		0.41
	INF2	2.39	18	0.56327		
	DNH	2.61	18	0.58702		0.39
	DNH2	2.38	18	0.50631		

### **Interpretation**

**Entitlement (En)** – in terms of the description of this dimension, a sense of entitlement provides justification for criminal behaviour. It appears that on average the ROL programme contributed to a relatively small, but empirically relevant reduction in the sense of entitlement of the members as indicated in the Table. The VOM programme appears to have had no effect in this regard.

**Historical Criminal Thinking (HIS)** – Walters (2013) indicated that the HIS scale tends to correlate strongly with En and AST, (Self-Assertion/Deception). This implies that individuals with a prior criminal belief system are more likely to be boisterous, over-assertive in forcing their own will onto others and achieving their own objectives. In this respect, the ROL programme appeared to have reduced the effect of prior criminal thinking patterns on current thinking. It is significant to note that prior thinking changed in current thinking as represented by En. The VOM programme appears not to have had such effect on prior criminal thinking of members. This is probably a result of the short duration of the VOM intervention, whereas the ROL programme has a substantial duration.

**Cognitive Indolence (Ci)** - This dimension reflects the ability to critically think about one's behaviour. High scorers lack critical ability and tend to take the path of least resistance. Such persons may be described as impulsive and likely to ensure others that everything will be okay. They are also likely to take shortcuts that get them into trouble frequently with parents and teachers. They come across as lazy, unmotivated and irresponsible. They are low-skilled in sorting out situations. The VOM programme seemed to have effectively influenced respondents towards lowering impulsivity and increasing a more critical stance towards situations. This can be

explained as the result of a more intense confrontation with the reality of one's actions, as respondents had to face the victims of their offences in a controlled environment.

**Infrequency (INF)** – This is one of the four key factors of the criminal thinking paradigm and refers to a tendency for faking bad (or good) behaviour. These persons are likely to fake psychiatric symptoms or extreme hostility towards others or to appear careless and confused. A significant observation is made from the Table above. The VOM programme contributed to an increase in faking behaviour. The reasons for this are not clear. It is possible that the mediation exposure of the respondent associated with the VOM programme may have forced respondents to come across more “bad” (or “good”) in order to be pardoned more easily by the victim. Although this interpretation may be speculative, it is plausible and consistent with Walters' finding that high scorers tend to fake bad responses in their own interests.

**Denial of Harm Factor Scale (DNH)** – This scale is regarded as having a smaller impact on the overall criminal thinking construct than any of the other dimensions. However, high scores on this scale indicate tendencies of rationalization and minimization of harm done to others. The scale generally correlates highly with the Mollification (Mo) and Sentimentality subscales (Sn). Denial of harm is also associated with high Infrequency scores. Overall, this construct assesses whether individuals tend to deny that they have done anything wrong, they will tend to write off bad things they do and are ignorant of any harmful consequences. In this regard, the VOM programme appears to have been more effective in achieving a reduction in this trend.

**Observed Peers committing offending behaviour (PDA)** – Both groups indicated a reduction in the number of friends that behave suspiciously, from pre- to post-test. In the comparison group respondents were more likely to see their friends behaving criminally, than in the experimental group where this trend decreased. In terms of this dimension it is concluded that the ROL programme was more effective in reducing social patterns of crime.

## **Discussion**

The above analysis indicates that the longer, life-skills-focused ROL programme was, due to its nature, more effective at addressing prior criminal thinking styles by reducing current sense of entitlement expressed by respondents in the experimental group. This, in spite of the fact that respondents in the experimental group may have been older and more experienced as offenders than the comparison group.

In contradiction, the VOM seemed to have been more effective in reducing tendencies to take short-cuts, and denial of the offence, and coming across lazy and confused. These behaviours may be interpreted as manipulative behaviour. It is concluded that programmes with

an emphasis on the victim offender relationship more likely express issues of self-justification, faking and manipulation. It is however of concern that this kind of intervention increased faking behaviour in the respondents.

### **Comparing the Experimental and Comparison group for Age differences**

T-tests conducted to examine differences between age groups.

**Confusion – revised (Cf-r)** – The two groups differed with regard to the extent of confusion communication they displayed in the group ( $M_{Exp} = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.24$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ),  $d = 0.41$ . Older youth in the experimental group were more likely to display confusion behaviour, as is associated with faking, careless responding or the presence of emotional disorders. The effect of aging on more fixed criminal thinking patterns is thereby confirmed.

**Cut-off (Co)** – Cut-off behaviour appeared to be more prevalent in younger comparison group respondents, as they were more likely to display rejection attitudes towards their behaviour, than the experimental group respondents ( $M_{Exp} = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ),  $d = 0.35$ .

**Infrequency (INF)** – Infrequency behaviour or faking good or bad behaviour seems to be associated more with older respondents, specifically within the experimental group, than with younger respondents in the comparison group ( $M_{Exp} = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.47$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ),  $d = 0.67$ .

**Fear-of-Change scale (FOC)** – This dimension describes the inability of the respondent to change behaviour towards more acceptable levels. Described as fear of change it describes the extent to which a person's fear of changing stands in the way of actual change. Younger respondents in the comparison group seemed to demonstrate higher levels of fear regarding change ( $M_{Exp} = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ),  $d = 0.38$ .

**Peer deviancy** – this scale measures the extent to which a person rates his friends as being involved in several criminal activities. The results show that older respondents in the experimental group are more likely to have friends displaying criminal behaviour, than the comparison group respondents ( $M_{Exp} = 1.48$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 0.98$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ),  $d = 0.60$ .

### **Discussion**

Age-related findings consistently indicate that older youth are more likely to have a better-established criminal thinking pattern than younger youth. The conclusion is reached that due to this result behavioural change may have been more difficult in the case of the experimental group

than in that of the comparison group. It is possible that the older-aged child would do better in a skills-oriented programme such as ROL, whereas the younger child had a better chance of thriving in the shorter VOM intervention.

### **Controlling for testing effect**

In this study, the researcher wishes to establish that respondents in the experimental group changed as a result of the programme, and not some other confounding variable such as the Pre-test. For this purpose, the ANCOVA test was used. ANCOVA tests whether the independent variable still influences the dependent variable after the influence of the covariate(s) has been removed. ANCOVA explains within-group variances after the removal of confounding covariates. Covariates are variables that potentially influence the outcome of the independent variable. (<https://www.statisticssolutions.com/one-way-ancova/>). As a requirement for ANCOVA analysis the two groups need to be independent of each other. In this regard the experimental and the comparison group in this study were composed of different individuals, resulting in two independent groups. To examine the real influence of the independent variable (The programme) on the group, Cohen's-d effect size calculations were conducted (Pallant, 2013). Results with effect sizes equal to or greater than 0.3 were interpreted as reflecting a practical meaningful influence. Co-variates were assumed to have been measured before the intervention, as was the case in this study, by using pre-test data for covariate analysis. A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the effectiveness of two different interventions designed to reduce respondents' Pro-Criminal Thinking styles. The independent variable was the type of intervention (ROL) and (VOM)), and the dependent variable consisted of scores on the different dimensions of the PICTS scale once the intervention was completed. Respondents' scores on the pre-intervention administration of the PICTS were used as the covariate in this analysis.

Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, and reliable measurement of the covariate. After adjusting for pre-intervention scores, there was no significant difference between the two intervention groups on post-intervention scores on the different dimensions of the PICTS, as indicated in the Table above. Relationships between the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores on the PICTS were mostly insignificant, but effect sizes indicated substantial effects.

Results of this analysis are provided in the following table.

**Table 4-6****ANCOVA results: Adjusted Means**

	Mean Experimental	Mean Comparison	Mean Square error	p-value	Effect size
<b>DF-r</b>	2.523	2.679	0.231	0.321	0.32
<b>Co</b>	2.498	2.213	0.428	0.291	0.44
<b>En</b>	2.349	2.449	0.277	0.386	0.29
<b>Sn</b>	2.333	2.59	0.636	0.166	0.46
<b>So</b>	2.439	2.182	0.302	0.156	0.47
<b>Ci</b>	2.556	2.285	0.279	0.119	0.51
<b>R</b>	2.486	2.331	0.261	0.353	0.30
<b>FOC</b>	2.385	2.174	0.322	0.086	0.58

**Discussion**

In contrast to the other scales, the Revised Defensiveness Scale (Df-r) is scored negatively (Walters, 2013, p.15). This means its score will be reversed compared to the other scales that are positively phrased. According to Walters (2013, p.8) the Defensiveness scale was later replaced by the Fear of Change scale. Defensiveness refers to rejection behaviour by participants, whereas offending behaviour is defended, and rationalization occurs. In terms of the above table it appears that the respondents in the experimental group were more likely to be defensive about their behaviour. This can be attributed to the experimental group being more experienced with regard to offending behaviour. With regard to Cut-off (Co), respondents in the experimental group were more likely to dismiss criminal events and their effects than the comparison group ( $M_{Exp} = 2.49$ ,  $SD = 0,716$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.21$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ),  $d = 0.44$ . According to Walters (2009:45) the Sentimentality (Sn) scale pinpoints the belief that performing good deeds somehow eliminates the harm a person has inflicted on others as a consequence of his or her involvement in a criminal lifestyle. Such individuals fail to recognize the harm they do to themselves, their families, and their victims (both known and unknown) because sentimentality limits their awareness. Experimental group respondents were less sentimental, or likely to undo bad by doing good things ( $M_{Exp} = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 0,62$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.59$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ),  $d = 0.46$ . It thus appears that the ROL more likely influenced its respondents towards having a sense of real concern for victims, or to be less sentimental and therefore able to make good, than VOM. Due to age and more criminal background, the respondents in the experimental group could have been less sensitive about offending behaviour. This is perhaps because respondents in (ROL) did not come face to face with their victims, as opposed to the respondents in VOM who had to face their victims and display remorse in order to be pardoned.

The experimental group was less super-optimistic than the comparison group at post-test as measured by the (So) sub-scale. According to (Walters, 2009:45) the Superoptimism (So) scale measures the belief that one will be able to indefinitely postpone or avoid the negative consequences of a criminal lifestyle (incarceration, injury, death). The best way to expose super-optimism is to point out the different ways the individual has been unable to escape the negative consequences of his or her criminal actions (e.g., jail, prison, and probation, loss of family or job). Super optimism is the unrealistic belief that when you see what happens to people committing crime, you will think that it will not happen to you. The results indicate that the experimental group was more over-optimistic than the comparison group ( $M_{Exp} = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.17$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ),  $d = 0.47$ . The Cognitive Indolence (Ci) scale assesses the tendency to take short-cuts and look for the easy way around problems. Such individuals are often enmeshed in controversy because their short-cuts invariably get them into trouble with those to whom they are accountable (supervisor, parent, and spouse) (Walters, 2009:45). The experimental group performed worse than the comparison group with regard to Cognitive Indolence ( $M_{Exp} = 2.55$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.29$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ),  $d = 0.51$ . The result shows that ROL appeared less effective in reducing cognitive indolence in the respondents than did VOM and confirms the finding under point 2 with regard to Ci.

The Fear-of-Change (FOC) scale is the most recently developed PICTS index; therefore, less information is available on it than there is on the other PICTS scales. It is believed that FOC measures an individual's apprehension about change and the degree to which such fear stands in the way of effective intervention. Most of the youth fear change because change is painful. The comparison group reflected higher fear of change than did the experimental group ( $M_{Exp} = 2.40$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ;  $M_{Comp} = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ),  $d = 0.58$ . Overall, ROL appeared more effective than VOM, according to the scores in the experimental and the comparison column.

No difference was observed regarding service perceptions (SPI) between the two groups. This is meaningful in terms of this study as it indicates that regardless of the type of intervention, the perceptions regarding the two interventions, (ROL) programme versus (VOM) programme, were mostly the same.

## **BETWEEN-GROUPS ANALYSIS ON THE PEER-DEVIANCY SCALE**

According to the Table above the following trends were observed.

The *Peer Deviancy Scale* measures frequencies of mild to more serious violent behaviours observed in one's friends. The more deviant behaviour is observed, the more deviant a person can be expected to be. The scale is answered on a 5-point Likert scale. The Alpha

reliability coefficient for the (PDS) was 0.838. Mean scores for both groups tended to be low at 1.0 – 1.5, the experimental group returning slightly higher mean scores than the comparison group. There was no difference with regard to the Mean number of friends indicated (6.76). Differences between groups were insignificant whilst differences within groups from Pre- to Post-Test were insignificant but effect sizes were 0.55 in the case of the experimental group and 0.47 in that of the comparison group respectively. The effect of friends seemed to improve over time in the experimental group as they responded, indicating that they broke with friends that had a negative impact on them. This trend was reversed in the comparison group, showing that the VOM intervention did not focus on re-defining peer-relationships.

### **Service-Perceptions Index (SPI)**

The Service Perceptions index is a single dimension scale and in this study returned an Alpha Coefficient of 0.783 on all eleven items. The Mean score for both groups on the SPI was 2.8.

Comparisons between groups on the Service Perceptions Index rendered an insignificant result and negligible effect size. Effectively, the groups did not differ on this dimension indicating that satisfaction with the programme was perceived largely equal for the two groups. The experimental group was slightly more positive about the programme impact. This furthermore indicates that respondents were relatively positive about the way they were dealt with by staff, the level of understanding they had of the processes they were exposed to, and the opportunities they were granted to respond actively.

### **Comparisons over time**

In this section the analysis focused upon changes that occurred in both groups in the time between the two measurements. In terms of this study this would be the period of the intervention. The Paired Samples test was used to measure differences between the two groups where

1=Experimental group and

2=Comparison group

The scores of the pre-test in both the experimental and comparison group differed with regard to changes in friendship patterns. The number of friends the respondent gained after the intervention increased in the comparison group and decreased in the experimental group during post-test.

The ROL programme appears to be more effective in changing contact with peers, compared to the VOM programme. This result is more complex to explain although it can be assumed that if a programme does not explicitly address socialization patterns such as in the VOM, the intervention cannot be expected to produce that outcome. It seems the experimental group was less likely to associate with friends who are committing crimes but those in the comparison group like to be in the company of negative friends.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide sufficient evaluation of the current state of evidence for diversion programmes (*Rhythm of Life*) in the North West Province. Most of the respondents from the experimental and the comparison groups were males. The number of friends decreased from pre-test to post-test in the experimental group due to the ROL programme. However, in the comparison group it increased from pre-test to post-test. The scores for infrequency (INF) increased from Pre- to Post-test in the experimental group but decreased in the comparison group due to tendencies of faking. INF suggests the presence of a “fake bad” response style, reading/language difficulties, or haphazard responding (Walters, 2009). INF is higher in the experimental group than in the comparison group. The experimental group demonstrated more confusion than the comparison group. Entitlement also decreased in the experimental group, indicating that the ROL programme was more effective at developing concern for others than did the VOM.

Even though it is widely accepted that PCAs increase the risk of criminal behaviour (Day, Kozar, & Davey, 2013), it was the intention of this article or study to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the impact of ROL on the PCAs of youth in conflict with the law. However, the study indicates that the ROL has a positive decreasing impact on the PCAs of youth in conflict with the law. Cut-off in the experimental group was better than in the comparison group because the youth managed to eliminate or remove other activities related to crime such as harming people and also eliminating committing crime. The experimental group was better than the comparison group in Cognitive Indolence. The scores show that the *Rhythm of Life* programme appeared more effective in reducing cognitive indolence in the respondents than in the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. The experimental group had committed more, and serious, current offences as opposed to the comparison group in the pre-test interview. The experimental group also was more likely to have a previous offence record whereas the comparison group consisted of first-time offenders. The *Rhythm of Life* programme performed better than the VOM and managed to influence criminal thinking patterns according to the above-mentioned thinking patterns. Some thinking patterns have changed due the ROL programme

Unfortunately, the comparison group ended up having many negative friends who led them into criminal activities, according to the researcher's data collection. However, recent research by Brezina and Topalli (2012) has shown that a large proportion of offenders conceive themselves as successful criminals with a high criminal self-efficacy. These offenders tend to think that criminal behaviour is the thing they are really good at. They do not regard conviction and incarceration as proof of failure, but rather as a kind of formative feedback, an opportunity to learn and to increase their criminal skills. The *Rhythm of Life* programme reduced the criminal thinking of the youth in conflict with the law. Their behaviours tend to change due to the programme they had attended. The *Rhythm of Life* programmes, more so than the VOM programme, confirmed that it is vital for changing youth's pro-criminal attitudes. According to Banse et al. (2013), in the five out of eight studies evaluating treatment effects on offense-specific PCAs or recidivism, the level of PCAs usually is lower from pre- to post-treatment scores. Wakeling et al. (2011) did not report the change of attitude in the scores.

Virtually all the studies that reported treatment effects on PCAs tend to lack acceptable control groups. It is not likely to conclude the decrease of PCAs that was in fact due to the treatment. The majority of studies investigating treatment effects on PCAs and recidivism were unsuccessful in reporting the direct relation between individual PCA transformation and the reoffending thereof. In order to recognize the meaningful risk factors, Mann et al. (2010) indicated that it is necessary to demonstrate that these are related to recidivism. Although it influences the risk factors and also alleviates recidivism in a theoretical significant logic. The diversion programmes can play vital roles in the lives of youth; hence they differ with regard to objectives, goals and implementation.

The measurement scales used in this study assisted in measuring the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law and of those at risk. The PICTS, Peer Deviancy Scale and Service Perception Index were scales that were utilized in this article.

Descriptive and frequency statistics were compiled to draw conclusions regarding the distribution of variables as well as to identify relevant trends in the data. The results indicated that the *Rhythm of Life* programme is significant and relevant for youth in conflict with the law.

Based on these results, programme planners, facilitators and researchers are advised to advance the development of programmes that offer a direct psychosocial intervention such as evidence-based, family-intervention and behavioural programmes in addition to case management, with the aim of offering different opportunities to youth in conflict with the law and also to those at risk, as well as to implement these programmes with high levels of supervision to attend to the fidelity of programme implementation of especially the *Rhythm of Life* programme.

In conclusion, the existing accredited diversion programmes can be beneficial to specific child offenders, particularly to first-time offenders and those who had committed less serious crimes. It appears that life-skills programmes such as the ROL do make a difference with regard to criminal thinking in youth offenders, and may be more effective for younger, first-time offenders. Therapeutic, specialized diversion programmes and appropriately trained professionals for such therapeutic programmes are needed for the child offender who has committed serious violent crimes and is in need of more intensive therapeutic intervention. This study has demonstrated a need for the continuation of ROL-type programmes. The answer to the research question was answered by the above mentioned quantitative study and the aim and objectives was met.

This study used the PICTS scale as its main instrument to assess criminal thinking. The researcher was impressed by the sensitivity of this instrument in identifying trends and patterns in this sample. The instrument as a whole proved to be reliable for local use, although some items had to be deleted to improve reliability. It appears that the instrument in general performed well.

### **Limitations of the study**

Although the study is limited by small numbers, it was still possible to investigate programme effects and contrast two programme options over time. Attrition rates were comparatively small as only three participants in the experimental group dropped out of the programme. The study showed programme nuances that can partially be explained by the nature of the programme. However, one need to consider the fact that circumstantial factor could have influenced programme impacts. We were unable to report on recidivism as the study terminated three months after completion of the programme.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above-mentioned data, it is thus recommended that the ROL programme should not only be used for youth that have already offended, but also for youth that are at risk. Currently, youth at risk are more likely placed in VOM-type programmes. It will be better to prevent the problem before it can occur; hence primary intervention as a level of Intervention. The ROL programme should also be provided to the youth at risk in order to understand the pros and slushes of crime.

The Department is to be consulted in order to strengthen after-care services in order to monitor the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law and also those at risk after completion of the Diversion programme and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. The Department of Social Development should capacitate all facilitators of programmes for youth in

conflict with the law and those at risk. Youth at risk should be exposed to the *Rhythm of Life* programme as a primary prevention measure and early intervention.

More studies need to be conducted on specific methods for reducing indirect thinking about crime. Aspects such as the inability of life-skills to influence infrequency (INF), sentimentalism (SI) and cut-off (CI) need to receive further research. In spite of the positive influence of the ROL programme on several behavioural and thought patterns, further work is needed to reduce these tendencies of longer-term functioning. Furthermore, larger scale, time-series studies are required involving larger samples and different contexts to enable reporting on recidivism rates over time.

No local studies involving criminal thinking among youth offenders have been located locally. Considering the effectiveness of using the PICTS in this study, more research concerning this instrument's utility value in local context should be conducted. Such studies should include validation studies to examine the psychometric properties of this instrument.

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## **SECTION C: ARTICLE 3**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH OFFENDERS REGARDING THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSION PROGRAMMES**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*Youth diversion programmes are conducted post-arrest and involve attendance of a structured programme with the intention of changing behaviour and reducing risk of re-offending. The effectiveness of these programmes in reducing criminal thinking and in changing behaviour is hardly evaluated in the South African context.*

*This article deals with the findings from qualitative in-depth interviews involving 20 youth in conflict with the law and 19 at-risk youth who participated in two vastly different types of diversion programmes – one a cognitive-behavioural life-skills programme and the other a Victim Offender Mediation programme with therapeutic content. The study asked them about the perceived benefits of each programme, and interviews were conducted three months after the programme. Findings indicate an overall positive cognitive change in both groups and claims of more constructive behaviour, regardless of programme attendance. Although preliminary, these findings suggest that the life-skills programme should be considered a baseline intervention for both groups, whilst the mediation programme should be considered an alternative for some cases.*

Key words: Diversion programme, *Rhythm of Life*, youth participants

## INTRODUCTION

Diversion is an intervention programme that is presented by the Department of Social Development to groups of youth who are in conflict with the law. The intervention is presented by the Department of Social Development which, in striving towards this ideal, has formulated and introduced a range of programmes that are presented on a regular basis in its different districts and under different circumstances, involving their own resources and a wide range of non-government institutions, with a view to reach certain objectives, one of which is to prevent youth from repeat offending and transition to a life of crime. According to the *Rhythm of Life* (2014), the Department of Social Development in South Africa offers life skills programmes in the form of social group work as part of the rehabilitation programme which youth in conflict with the law and at risk have to attend and complete in order to avoid a criminal record.

One of the main purposes of the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) is to divert youth who were found guilty of criminal behaviour, in appropriate cases, from formal justice procedures. The objectives of diversion concern instilling responsibility, reintegrating the youth with the family and community, involving victims in the diversion process, as well as preventing stigmatisation of the child and preventing them from having a criminal record.

Life skills training is one such intervention, regularly offered at different service points, amongst which are rural service points of DSD in the Northwest province, South Africa. Life-skills training programmes are suitable cognitive-behavioural interventions, suitable for a range of age groups, and considered a worthwhile option for youth in diversion (Geyer, 2006; Taute, 2007; Van Heerden, 2001). This article forms part of a larger study that aims at evaluating the impact of diversion programmes on the criminal thinking patterns of youth in conflict with the law. In this article the question is posed: What are the perceptions of child participants in the *Rhythm of Life* programme regarding the effectiveness of the programme and the diversion process associated with it. This phase of the larger study is conducted from a more interpretivist paradigm of thought. In this approach the subjectivity of the participants is valued, and the researcher is interested in their subjective perceptions regarding the perceived value or impact of the intervention programme. The objective for this phase was to describe the perceptions of youth participants from a rural context in the North West province regarding two programme offerings, namely the *Rhythm of Life* life-skills programme and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme regarding the impact of these programmes on them as participants, three months' post-intervention.

The interested was on the participant's deeper meanings and feelings and idiosyncratic reasons for their behaviours and whether any changes that occurred in these, can be attributed

to their attendance of the programme (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). In this phase the report was on on the relative impact of the “*Rhythm of Life*” programme on the participant, from the subjective perspective of the participant compared to the perspectives of those participants that received an alternative, lesser, non-life skills-oriented intervention, the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. This study is guided by a review of literature about diversion interventions in general, and life skills-oriented diversion programmes in particular, has a thorough understanding of the underlying change logic of both programmes. The study does not actively aim at comparing these programmes, but rather at developing an understanding of the relative perceived impacts of both programmes.

This preparation enabled to consider whether any changes in thinking or behaviour can be attributed directly to either programme.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Van Biljon and Rousseau (2010), South Africa, due to its socio-economic circumstances, is faced with the challenge of large numbers of young people guilty of or at risk of committing offences. The diversion programme in the North West Province provides psycho-social services to youth in conflict with the law with the focus on divertees’ development and the improvement of their social functioning. During 2008/9, 554, and during 2009/10, 525 youth in the North West Province were channelled away from the criminal justice system by enrolling them in the Khulisa programmes (Van Biljon & Rousseau, 2010), a collaborative diversion effort between DSD and a non-government organization. The Department of Social Development has introduced its own life skills programme, the *Rhythm of Life* programme, and this is presented at different sites within the North West Province.

The Child Justice Act allows for young offenders who admit to committing certain offences, to be diverted in appropriate circumstances (Child Justice Act 75 of 2008). The Department of Social Development defines diversion as a way of getting youth to take responsibility for what they have done without taking them to courts and prisons. Instead, specific tasks or requirements are set, for example to attend a life-skills programme where specific skills are modelled and practised, or for their transgression in some other way as determined by the situation in the case of *Victim Offender Mediation*.

It has been demonstrated in other parts of this dissertation through literature review, that there is a need for diversion programmes to be evaluated for their effectiveness in bringing about changes in youth’s criminal thinking and reducing the possibility of a recurrence of offending as a result of behavioural problems of these youth in the community context. Through evaluation

processes, necessary adjustments can be made to programme contents, the programme's underlying change logic or the effectiveness of delivery mechanisms, should a need arise. Souls (2018) argues that some social risk factors related to the geographical contexts in which youth reside have been emphasised as possible contributing factors to offending and the reoffending of youth in conflict with the law, including post-diversion. These include youth's constant exposure to physical and emotional violence in the areas where they reside, emphasising the contextual influence on offending – a factor that contributes to re-occurrence of the same or similar offence – if the youth returns to the same community and friends post-completion of a diversion programme. For the aforementioned reasons, this study is aimed at investigating the relative medium-term impact of diversion programmes on youth participants of such programmes, and at determining whether their participation had led to a reduction of pro-criminal thinking of youth in conflict with the law, that had been influenced by contextual factors. Furthermore, besides environmental influences and crime opportunities, a range of individual factors are associated with involvement in persistent juvenile delinquency (youth in conflict with the law) and adult criminality (adult in conflict with the law). These mentioned factors include the existence of criminal associates adhering to the antisocial attitudes, beliefs and problem-solving skills (Andrews & Bonta, 2003; McGuire, 2004).

The study is informed largely by the current work of Walters (2017) who studied the importance of criminal thinking in the execution of offending behaviour. According to his argumentation, first-time offending behaviour seems not to be preceded by active thinking about the crime, whilst follow-up offending behaviour is preceded by criminal thinking. Whereas first-time offences may be regarded as impulsive and reactive perhaps, follow-up offences may contain traces of patterning as brought about by criminal thinking preceding the act.

There is a need for a study that ties treatment-related changes in cognition to succeeding the reductions in antisocial activity and recidivism by measuring criminal thinking from beginning to end intervention and testing and making sure that the changes connect with any successive modifications in antisocial activity. Follow-up sessions will be needed without delaying the treatment (Banse et al., 2013). The aim of intervention with youth will thus be to install pro-social thinking patterns and thereby prevent future offending behaviour. This theory indirectly plays a role in the execution of the current study in that the researcher focused on the perceptions of youths regarding the benefits of an intervention that was designed to change cognitions and install positive life-skills. The problem for research is that little is understood locally about the medium-term effectiveness of life-skill oriented diversion training programmes. The research question investigates whether two diversion interventions by the department of Social Development were

able to positively influence the thinking patterns and perceptions of child participants three months after completion of these programmes.

This qualitative study is a follow-up study in a larger project that quantitatively evaluated the immediate direct impact of the *Rhythm of Life* programme against a lesser intervention, the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme, currently presented by the Department of Social Development at several of its service points.

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

The aim of this study was to evaluate the medium-term outcome of the *Rhythm of Life* life-skills diversion programme as well as an alternative, the *Victim Offender Mediation programme* on the current pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law, who participated in these programmes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

This study comprised of qualitative individual in-depth interviews with each child participant three months after completion of the *Rhythm of Life* and *Victim Offender Mediation* sessions respectively. Although the larger study regarded programme as experimental for its perceived higher effectiveness, and programmes control, this study loosely compares participants in the two programmes, since researcher were more interested in the contents they presented.

According to the *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014) *Rhythm of Life/* life skills programme is one of the five therapeutic programmes that are presented as Diversion programmes for 14-17-year-old youth in conflict with the law. The goal of the life skills programme is to provide capabilities that promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face realities of life. According to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) Sec 62(1)(a), *Victim Offender Mediation* means an informal procedure which is intended to bring together a child who is alleged to have committed an offence and the victim, by means of which a plan is developed with regard to how the child will redress the effects of the offence.

*Victim Offender Mediation* can only take place after both the victim and the youth have consented to the procedures.

The child offender and the victim meet in the first session for the victim to express his/her feelings towards the offence. Sometimes both the victim and the child offender can invite their parents or relatives; this is termed a Family Group Conference programme. It allows the victim's

parents and those of the child offender to express their point of view and feelings pertaining to the offence committed. According to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) Section 61(1) (a), a family group conference is an informal procedure which is intended to bring together a child who is alleged to have committed an offence and the victim, supported by their families and other appropriate persons to develop a plan on how the child will redress the effects of the offence.

A family group conference can only yield a positive outcome if both the victim and the offender consent to participate in the conference. Both the *Victim Offender Mediation* and the *Family Group Conferencing* intervention/programme were interventions for the comparison group (youth at risk). The following Table highlights the differences between the two programmes:

**Table 5-1**  
**Differences between the two diversion programmes with respect to programme offering**

<i>Rhythm of Life</i> programme (1)	<i>Victim Offender Mediation</i> programme (2)
Has a fixed six-week period of weekly meetings during which specific contents are shared	Is loosely structured and duration varies from case to case
Participants have no contact with the victim	Consists of scheduled meetings between victim and offender
Participants received different life-skills	Process only therapeutic, no life-skills
Training focus that is not directly related to offence	Objective is to repair damages and reconcile

Both programmes aim at reducing the risk of re-occurrence of the offence.

**Population and sampling methods**

The larger study consisted of an experimental and a comparison group. Participants, who were regarded as the population, were both male and female offenders between ages 14 and 17 years, and had been referred by court to the Department of Social Development for compulsory attendance of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme.

A total number of thirty youth who met the research criteria of the research were recruited as participants in the initial study. However, only twenty-two participants started attending sessions at the time of this study. Of the twenty-two participants a further two withdrew their participation in this study due to not completing the programme.

The population, from which the comparison group was drawn, consisted of youth (14 – 17 years) who were alleged to have committed an offence, but had not been charged, and was diverted to an alternative less-intense intervention, the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. These youths did not appear on the active caseloads of the Department of Social Development in North West. According to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008), *Victim Offender Mediation*

means an informal procedure which is intended to bring together a child who is alleged to have committed an offence and the victim, during which a plan is developed on how the child will redress the effects of the offence.

Twenty-three youth participated in the comparison group of which four were lost due to attrition. The comparison group sample was from the same delivery sites, but those participants who received the VOM intervention which, for purposes of this research, is considered a non-skills oriented, lesser intervention. The sample in this study came from the population that participated in the two programmes and consisted of all youth that completed both programmes.

### **Data collection**

Data were collected during a scheduled interview session conducted with each participant three months after completion of both programmes, during data collection sessions at the different service offices where the participants attended the programmes and also at secluded venues at some schools during the afternoon after school hours. An appointment card was sent to each participant indicating date and time of the follow-up appointment and they were reminded of their attendance one week prior to the data collection. An interview was conducted with each participant individually.

Data were collected by means of qualitative in-depth interviews and recorded digitally. A single-question interview schedule was used accompanied by probing follow-up questions. The interview question was open-ended and explored each participant's perceptions of the benefits of the *Rhythm of Life* programme for the individual participant. The main question that was posed was: *Right, now tell us whether you think (perceive) the programme you attended did anything for you?* Probing questions were formulated to gain the necessary depth regarding narratives or commentary provided by participants following their attendance of the programme.

A digital recorder was used to record interviews and the researcher made field notes of observations additional to the recordings. Interviews were conducted in English and Setswana according to protocol as this was also preferred by the participants during data collection. Probing questions were posed until data saturation was reached.

In a bid to improve objectivity and to counter impression management, data for this study were collected by the researcher, who had no direct interest in or prior contact with participants, in spite of this, it was observed that initial responses tended to present overly positive pictures of programme outcomes. This effect was gradually lessened as participants got into the interviews. Twenty (20) youth from the experimental group and nineteen (19) from the comparison group were interviewed. However, the total number of thirty-nine (39) both from the experimental and

the comparison group of youth were interviewed. The researcher separated the experimental and the comparison group for the interviews.

Data analysis, according to De Vos et al. (2011), is a process by means of which order and structure are brought to the mass of collected data. Collected data were approached as two separate and independent sets linked to the specific programme that participants been attended. Both the experimental and comparison group were contacted for a follow-up interview within three months after completion of the programme. The experimental and the comparison group were interviewed separately with regard to the *Rhythm of Life* and *Victim Offender Mediation* programmes. Qualitative data analysis methodology, specifically thematic analysis, was applied in accordance with the eight steps proposed by Creswell (2013). The steps of analysis comprise organizing the data, reading and describing, classifying and interpreting data into codes and themes, and lastly presenting and visualizing the data. Through a process of in-vivo coding the topics and sub-topics were generated from the direct perceptual data and developed an in-depth understanding of the themes that emerged from the data. This thematic analysis assisted in answering the research question regarding perceptions of immediate programme impact from each participant's perspective.

Data were compiled in accordance with the themes so as to determine from the participants' personal perceptions whether the respective programmes they were exposed to – *Rhythm of Life* or *Victim Offender Mediation* programme, had reached its objective and had any significant impact on the participants. The meaning of these themes were interpreted against the preliminary theory of the programme and literature, in order to explain what change might have occurred and, if change had occurred, to what extent such change could be attributed to the intervention programme. There was an indication of the criminal thinking pattern receiving attention, such as behaviour and attitude changes. The recent research performed by Brezina and Topalli (2012) has revealed that a large part of offenders considers themselves offenders who are successful criminals with a high criminal self-efficacy. They have a tendency to believe or think that they are good at criminal behaviour, whereas some may feel that crime is the only thing that they are good at without considering other positive aspects of life. They do not regard conviction and incarceration as proof of failure, but rather as an opportunity to learn and to increase their criminal skills. This may lead to the difficulties of changing their PCAs. The recent diversion treatment programmes should be revised in order to take the aspect of PCAs into consideration.

## **Ethical aspects**

The study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Faculty of Health Sciences of North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus (NWU 00019-18-S1). The ethical approval was also obtained from the North-West Department of Social Development to conduct the study before commencing with the study. Information that was obtained from the participants was obtained in a confidential and anonymous manner so that participants could not be identified at a later stage (De Vos et al., 2011).

- **Permission to conduct the study**

Prior to the commencement of the study, the approval was obtained from the North West Department of Social Development to conduct the study.

- **Informed Consent**

The participants of groups who were youth in conflict with the law and the youth at risk and the parents of both groups signed consent forms before commencing with this phase of the research project. Written informed consent implies that all possible information or sufficient information regarding the goal of the research, the procedures that would be utilised during the study, the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers that the participants could be exposed to, as well as the reliability of the researcher, must be furnished to all potential participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2016).

- **Privacy/Confidentiality**

Privacy indicates personal privacy, while confidentiality is indicative of information that needs to be dealt with in a confidential manner. Information obtained by the researcher was obtained in this manner so that participants could not be identified at a later stage (De Vos et al., 2011). Such data is kept safely at North West University within COMPRES entity for a period of 5 years and will thereafter be destroyed.

In this study, the research findings did not reflect the names or identifying characteristics of the research participants. The researcher anonymized the data by allocating numbers to participants such as participant 1, participant 2, in order to maintain confidentiality. Strydom (2011) stresses that anonymity and confidentiality place a strong obligation on the researcher; thus the participants were assured of confidentiality of the information gathered and of the fact that their identities would not be revealed in the research report.

- **Voluntary Participation**

The mediator explained the aim and process of the research to the participants and their guardians so that they had a clear understanding of what the study entailed and the possible impact of the study on them. Participants and their guardians were given time to think about the research study and to be sure about wanting to participate in the study without being forced by the researcher. Each participant had a week to decide whether he/she would participate in the research study.

Participation was voluntary at all times and no one was forced to participate in the project. Participants were informed by the mediator that they could withdraw from the study at any stage and that they had a choice to participate in the research. No participant was pressured to form part of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2010).

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In this section, the generated themes and sub-themes are discussed. Data from literature were used to substantiate the findings, and direct responses of the participants are also quoted in order to reflect the themes. Campbell et al. (2017) points out that the findings from relevant studies should be analysed and arranged according to the themes and sub-themes that emanate from the data and not simply reported in a regimental fashion.

The following themes and sub-themes were identified during the experimental and the comparison group interviews:

### **THEME 1: Behavioural changes**

The participants were questioned on how the *Rhythm of Life* and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programmes assisted them. The majority of participants in the experimental group indicated that the programme assisted them in modifying their behaviour and becoming better youth. Participant 2 from the experimental group stated that he behaves well at home and at school. He further stated that he is no longer roaming around in the streets; especially at night, and when he has money he gives it to his parents to buy electricity and also fetches water when there is no rainfall.

Suleiman (2011) noted that a particular behaviour is antisocial if any of these three criteria are present, namely when behaviour does not allow a person to function effectively with others as a member of the society; when such behaviour does not permit the person to meet his or her own needs; and when behaviour has a negative effect on the wellbeing of an individual and others.

Participants 3 (experimental group) indicated that when teachers previously were talking to him, he did not take them seriously. Currently he has changed due to the *Rhythm of Life* programme because they were taught on the communication module how to effectively communicate to people. According to the *Rhythm of Life* module (2014), communication as module **four** emphasises that communication is of importance among youth and their parents, whilst different skills ranging from listening skills, constructive communication and conflict resolution were dealt with. Theories of behaviour tend to be linear and explain the reasons why behaviour may occur by considering a number of predictors and their associations with one another and how these could influence the likelihood of a particular behaviour (Head & Noar, 2013). The majority of the participants from both the experimental group and the comparison group experienced problems related to lack of respect for people around them with their behaviour; hence through attendance of the *Rhythm of Life* and *Victim Offender Mediation* programmes their behaviours were modified.

Participants 9 (experimental group) indicated that the programme assisted him because the police are no longer coming to his home environment to look for him. The programme assisted him in modifying his behaviour. Participant 6 (experimental group) concluded by saying that the programme taught him so much that he changed to be a better person, and that one day he can have a future that is very bright. He is really a changed person according to him. He further explained that he used to arrive home late and his parents were beating him, but currently he no longer arrives home late and now complies with house-rules. He stated that his parents now treat him like their child” because they now sometimes take me to town to buy me shoes.

Participants 6 from the comparison group reported that he used to steal other people’s belongings but that the *VOM* modified his behaviour because he is no longer stealing. He considered himself a changed person as he realized his behaviour impacted other people negatively. The participants further reported that he is a happier person because he was granted permission to apologise to the victim for the pain he had caused. Berg (2012) reports that the findings in the Western Cape Province concluded that diversion programmes are unable to solely transform the behaviour of the youth offender and sustain any socially acceptable behaviour without placing extended efforts on improving the socio-economic conditions of the child, family and community. Participants of both the *Rhythm of Life* and the *VOM* programmes in the North West province from three service points realized that they were not portraying good behaviour but after having attended the sessions, they realized their mistakes of disrespecting and hurting people and presented narratives of regret.

## **SUB-THEME 1: Respect**

The participants were asked how the *Rhythm of Life* and *VOM* programmes had assisted them. Participants in the experimental group indicated that the programmes assisted them in the sense that they were now respecting their teachers and parents. Some participants in the comparison group indicated that the programme assisted them in the sense of respecting their teachers. Participants reported that at first they did not respect their parents and educators at school and in their home environment. *Rhythm of Life* programme provided them with direction on how to respect their elders in order to be valued by the society at large. Participant 1 from the experimental group stated that the programme made him to “change in life” and also to “respect my parents”. He further indicated his respect for his parents by assisting them with household chores, listening to their house rules and responding more positively when being reprimanded.

According to participant 2 the *Rhythm of Life* programme helped him to respect people. He also indicated that he currently knows how to respect people because at first he was undermining everyone, and at school he listened to no one. “*I was receiving poor results at school; I was not listening to the teachers or doing schoolwork*”. “*I thank the programme, it helped me not to bunk school and currently I respect people. They say respect comes first*”.

Participant 4 reported that he was not respecting teachers but now he does respect them, including his parents. He is no longer undermining teachers at school; moreover, he respects all of his teachers.

Participant 1 from the comparison group indicated that he was disrespecting people on the street, especially elders. However, the *VOM* programme taught him how to respect elders because the facilitator of the programme (social worker) taught him about respect. Participant 2 further indicated that he was swearing at teachers and talked to them like he would talk to his peers. Currently he respects them due to the *Victim Offender Mediation*. Participant 7 (comparison group) stated that the programme helped him tremendously because he was only eating at home and leaving the house to be on the street and coming back later to sleep, without assisting at home.

Participant 5 from the comparison group reported that “now I am respecting my teachers, my elders and everyone who is older than me because this programme encouraged me to do better things. I am very changed person now. This programme it needs to help other people so much because it helped me to get on the right track so I think it will help other people who are on the same track as me”. Participants from the experimental group as well as from the comparison group were pleased about the programmes. Most of their responses to the question were the

same. They indicated that the *Rhythm of Life* and the *Victim Offender Mediation* assisted them with regard to respecting other people; especially their teachers at school.

## **THEME 2: Friends and Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure extends to all groups. A peer group refers to persons that belong to the same age or status. Examples of peer groups include, age peer group, school or educational peer group, social peer group, professional peer group and work peer group (Carlson, 2010). Nsofor (2013) explains that peer associates have an excessive influence on the lifestyle of their members. Peer pressure is the feeling of being pushed into doing something by someone of your own age; it can be positive or negative peer pressure. Participants from the experimental group reported that they were influenced and controlled by peer pressure in order to portray negative behaviour. Participant 2 (experimental group): "I just visit few friends; the programme assisted me because I lost interest in friends. Currently after school I go straight home and wash my school clothes. Also check schoolwork and play in the street. After playing, I go back home". Participant 3 from the experimental group indicated that the programme assisted him by taking him away from friends that are gangsters.

Life skill training is a structured intervention of which the duration is roughly three months. It accommodates groups of around twelve participants who share similar behavioural problems. Parents attend the first and last sessions, which aim at reintegrating the child with his/her family. Programme activities include role-play, problem-solving and homework aimed at changing the way participants think (Steyn, 2011). It seems that the participants struggled to change their lives to be better youth and the programme assisted them in making the right choices. One of the participants from the experimental group reported that "the programme helped me to stop roaming around the streets with many friends and also groups. Now I choose good friends". Participants 7 (experimental group) further reported that at first he was a person of friends but now he stopped having friends. He also indicated that he had wrong friends because they were disrespectful towards their parents at their homes and they also influenced him to not respect his parents. When his parents reprimanded him, especially to stop roaming around in the streets at night, his friends would say: "do not listen to your parents because they waste your time".

Participants 5 (comparison group) further indicated that his friends were dodging school periods; they were also getting out of the school when the school was still on and relaxing outside the classroom. He also joined them during school hours, but he was not part of them when they were unlawfully leaving the school premises. Participants 6 reported that "When I am with my friends, they make bad things by not listening to the elders and teachers when reprimanded and when I try to stop them they think that I like being clever. I decided to stop being in their company".

According to the data collected from the experimental and comparison group, the majority of participants in the experimental group were not assertive because friends controlled them. However, participants from the comparison group were assertive due to the fact that they did not do what their friends were doing. As a result, the *Rhythm of Life* and the *Victim Offender Mediation* assisted them. Berg (2012) points out that peer relation appears to influence the risk of youth reoffending post diversion. The findings of this evaluation highlighted that a person who the youth associate themselves with, in the areas where they stay or at school, can place the child at a higher or lower risk of reoffending. Similarly, youth's relationships with older individuals, alongside the dropping out of school and the "school-to-prison pipeline" placed the child at risk of reoffending.

### **THEME 3: Household chores**

Participant 2 from the experimental group indicated that he assists his parents with house chores such as fetching water from the community tap. Sometimes if his parents are not home, he cooks for them and at their arrival he also dishes up for them. He further indicated that after eating, he washes the dishes. According to participant 7 from the comparison group, the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme assisted him because he assists his parents with fetching water and cleaning the yard at his home. One participant from the experimental group and another one from the comparison group indicated that they are assisting their parents with house chores due to *Rhythm of Life* and *Victim Offender Mediation*. The majority of the participants from both groups did not comment on household chores. It seems that they are not interested in assisting with household chores in their respective homes.

### **THEME 4: School and study**

Participant 2 (experimental group) reported as follows: "*I was receiving poor results at school; I was not listening to the teachers or doing schoolwork. I thank the programme; it helped me not to bunk school*". Babatunde (2016) noted that some youth resort to antisocial behaviour due to their inability to cope with the academic rigours of the school. It is possible that attendance of the programme could have contributed to better coping skills with regard to school pressure, but that such youth require further support from their schools. Roestenburg and Oliphant (2008) observed that youth with positive relations with their teachers at school were more remorseful about what they had done, had more positive intentions about positive behaviour and were more willing to change their behaviour at school, compared to youth with negative relationships at school.

Participant 4 stated that he is no longer bunking school; he is attending it on a regular basis. Currently he is doing his schoolwork on time at home but not in the school environment. He further stated that he stopped roaming around in the street and realized that schoolwork is very important. The environment in which youth live can influence them, especially when parental guidance is lacking. The school is a major and important environment in which a child develops during the formative years. When parents do not consistently react to the undesired behaviour of an adolescent, the child might continue to engage in more deviant behaviours in school (Suleiman, 2011).

Participant 5 (experimental group) reported as follows: "*The programme helped me a lot so that now I can do my schoolwork and come to school on time.*" Similarly, Hargovan (2013) stated that the central objective of the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 is to encourage the diversion of young offenders away from formal court procedures and to grant youth the opportunity of expressing their views on the circumstances of their offending behaviour.

Participant 9 from the experimental group expressed his feeling by indicating that he last attended school in 2017 when he was doing Grade 9. The reason was that his teachers were confusing him because they did not want him in their class because he was repeating the grade. Currently the programme assisted him to find a job in order to maintain his unemployed parents but in addition to this, the programme did not assist him because he is not attending school, meaning the social worker failed to request the principal to take him back. He also indicated that his parents are too old to search for a job. Participants from the comparison group indicated nothing pertaining to school or studies; hence in the experimental group the participants are interested in education.

#### **THEME 5: Substance abuse**

Substance abuse is a burning issue among our youth; particularly youth who were in both the experimental and comparison groups. One of the participants from the experimental group reported: "I was smoking cigarettes and also dagga but now I quitted. I am no longer smoking; I am normal like other people. I think I will never smoke because I have realized that how smokers live. They become troublemakers, especially when coming to the money issue; you have to be in front of shops in order to ask for cigarette money. Also you don't have time to read your books or study for class perfection". Berg (2012) suggests that different substance abuse programmes can be presented to the child offenders at different stages of their involvement with substance-related disorders. A distinction can therefore be drawn between the development and implementation of diversion programmes that focus on, for example, a child who "experiments", a child who uses

drugs more frequently and a child who needs a more intense intervention. This type of gradation can be employed at various levels and programmes for diversion.

Another participant from the experimental group indicated that he likes to go shopping to buy cold drinks and sweets in order to stay away from abusing substance; hence the programme strengthened his self-assurance. Prior to attending the programme, he experienced problems such as coughing and bleeding in his nose due to smoke. Participant 7 (experimental group) further indicated that he was smoking cigarettes and during his arrival in the morning at school, he looked for cigarettes in order to smoke. Also after school he bought cigarettes and abandoned his schoolwork. The programme motivated him to quit smoking.

One of the participants from the comparison group reported that his friend wanted to smoke but he refused. The reason was that he realized that his friend would never gain anything from smoking and he would bother his parents by asking money for cigarettes.

Participant 7 (comparison group) reported that the *Victim Offender Mediation assisted me because I was in a company of bad friends and they were smoking dagga, roaming around the street at night and we were not respecting elders. I am OK now and doing my schoolwork and I am no longer dodging class lessons. I did not know what came to my mind, I saw myself smoking. I also saw people smoking and wanted to experiment*". The majority of participants in the experimental group were smoking, however in the comparison group only one participant was smoking; hence the programmes assisted them in staying away from smoking.

#### **THEME 6: Decision-making.**

Most diversion programmes include a life skill orientation section, set out to impart pro-social skills such as decision-making, communication and conflict resolution skills to groups of youth in conflict with the law and within a structured context (Steyn, 2005). This can be reflected in the following comments of two participants from both the experimental and comparison group. One of the participants in the experimental group indicated that the programme taught him how to be a better person and how to make the right decision. It also taught him the wrong and the right ways. The *Rhythm of Life* manual (2014) module 5 focusses on "*Transforming*" (Problem-solving and Decision-making). This session includes learning to work together in solving problems, applying rational thinking for solving problems and becoming more responsible. Participant one indicated that the programme assisted him in that he made the decision to assist his parents financially. He further indicated that after having attended the programme he started to work on a tender of fetching water and cleaning people's yards. The odd job tender helps him

in the sense that he now can take care of his family financially because his parents are struggling in this respect.

Participant 6 from the comparison group reported that: “the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme taught me so much that I can change to be a better person, that one day I can have the future that is very bright. I am really changed person and really looking forward to change”. The two programmes assisted the participants in making their own positive decisions without influence. In the *Victim Offender Mediation* there is no manual that talks about a decision-making module. However, the facilitators briefly taught youth, those who were in the *VOM programme*, about decision-making.

### **THEME 7: Gangsterism**

According to the National Institute of Justice (2015) a common definition across all definitions specified of gangs, is the use of the term ‘group’, which highlights the understanding that regardless of the overlapping activities, gangs commonly operate on the norm of a group of more than three individuals and operate with the aim of reaching certain objectives related to criminal activities. Another participant from the experimental group reported that he formed part of the SVK (“*Stout Van Kak*”) gangster group, but he is no in that group. Participant 2 from the experimental group indicated that he formed part of a gang called MOB, but that he currently does not belong to that gang. He further indicated that he is living alone but concentrates more on his books. Participants 6 from the experimental group indicated that he was part of a gang group called ML (“*Money Lover*”) but that he had left the group because he realized that it is important to listen to his educators, at home and any elders on the street. The presence of gangs’ increases bullying, a culture of violence and leaving people as victims, and bullying of learners as well as teachers by gang members and non-gang members prevails, especially in schools (Mncube & Steinman, 2014).

Participants 5 in the comparison group indicated that he likes being in a group of friends but not meaning a gang group.

The majority of the participants from the experimental group reported that they formed part of gang-related groups, but no longer forms part of a gang. The participants from the comparison group are not familiar with gangs because they did not mention anything about a gang group, but the experimental group is familiar with it because the majority of them formed part of gangs and they also called those gang groups by name. Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, & Freng (2009) showed that although serious violent offending is present among youth with relatively few risk factors, youth gang members face a higher risk of serious violent offending than

their non-gang counter-parts when the number of risk factors is significant. Those youths who are in a gang group are likely to commit crime; hence those who are not in gang groups are at risk of committing serious crimes. However, the *Victim Offender Mediation* assisted them in not becoming part of a gang group; hence prevention. In the *VOM* programme the facilitators advise and teach youth the danger of being in a gang group because currently gangsterism is a burning issue.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the qualitative data were that the Diversion programmes (*Rhythm of Life* and *Victim Offender Mediation*) are playing a vital role in assisting youth in modifying their behaviour, especially those who are already in conflict with the law. The programme can be considered a treatment that can measure changes towards criminal thinking of youth. It is commonly agreed that behavioural and cognitive behavioural interventions are the most effective and efficient interventions for juvenile offenders (Tafrate & Mitchell, 2013).

The participants further indicated that they were encountering problems with regard to friends and peer pressure, substance abuse, decision-making, behavioural changes, household chores and respect as a sub-theme.

Participants were experiencing challenges with the above-mentioned themes and sub-themes; they did however realise that both the programmes played a vital role in their lives. Hence the *Rhythm of Life* played a huge vital role in the lives of these youth in conflict with the law because they were facing serious charges levelled against them. The majority of the participants in the experimental group were not assertive because friends/peers had controlled them; consequently, they resorted to substance abuse. However, participants from the comparison group were assertive seeing that they did not do what their friends were doing.

Most of the participants alluded that it was difficult for them to make their own decision with regard to their everyday lives; they depended on their friends to decide for them. There were members of different gang groups and who were disrespecting people prior to their attendance of the diversion programme. According to the article written by Chu et al. (2014), "*gang-affiliated youth offenders scored higher than their non-gang counterparts with regard to negative peer association on two risk assessment measures, which suggests that they have higher needs in this respect*". Based on the research gathered by different researcher, the existing literature reflects that youth gang members tend to engage in violent behaviours and violent recidivism (Ang et al., 2012; Chu et al., 2012). The results of the *Rhythm of Life* were generally positive in dealing with youth in conflict with the law, attitudes and beliefs concerning crime. Criminal thinking

can lead to criminal behaviour. Recent evidence indicates that a change in criminal thinking, as measured by applying the *General Criminal Thinking* (GCT) score of the Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS: Walters, 1995), may be a good analyst of future offending behaviour (Walters & Cohen, 2016).

In future, redress towards victims of crime by youth offenders should take place because crime involves victims. It will also be important for intervention programs to include activities that would assist gang-affiliated youth offenders in order to enhance their criminal behavioural control, problems-solving abilities and attitudes towards negligence.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSION**

Youth commit crimes because most of them are not aware of the consequences, exposure to physical and emotional violence, and internal and external dysfunctional environments. Some are involved in criminal activities due to negative peer pressure from the environment they are living in. Currently, theories applied in public health and behaviour change interventions more generally tend to emphasise individual and occasionally interpersonal rather than broader social and environmental variables (Glanz & Bishop, 2010). Some of the youth in this sample admitted to abusing substances such as cannabis and alcohol on an experimental level before joining the intervention programmes. It is concluded that offending behaviour in the case of this sample may be related to problematic substance abuse patterns combined with other socio-economic circumstances. Due to deteriorating behavioural patterns they systematically lost respect for their parents and educators. Although several participants claimed that they changed their behaviour by attending both the *Rhythm of Life* and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programmes, it appears that such behavioural change should be regarded as an initial response, perhaps initiated by being under pressure of the justice system. As such the overly positive response from participants should be viewed with some scepticism, as it is known that offending behaviour is often driven by more complex underlying factors and that any findings indicating cognitive-behavioural changes can rightly be regarded as preliminary. Most of the participants confirmed the significant behavioural changes, regardless of the programme they attended, making it somewhat difficult to compare and contrast the two programmes. Evidence, however, suggests that brief cognitive-behavioural interventions have a mediating effect on the pro-criminal thinking of first-time offenders such as youth. This means that cognitive-behavioural interventions such as life-skills programmes may be effective in instilling more constructive ways of thinking regarding management of interpersonal situations in life (Walters, 2017). This changed thinking may contribute to more positive behavioural responses and more pro-social thinking patterns. It is

possible, in view of this evidence that the offence-related behaviour of youth may indeed change as a result of such intervention. Follow-up and continued intervention both by parents and teachers should support youth and assist them in negotiating a more constructive contract with society. In view of the supportive evidence in favour of cognitive behavioural interventions, it may be concluded that the *Rhythm of Life* programme may be more effective than initially postulated, compared to the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme, but both programmes appeared to have changed child participants' thinking about offending behaviour, according to the researcher's analysis.

*Rhythm of Life* facilitators use a manual during group facilitation. However, this is not the case in the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme where the intervention is more therapeutic in nature and facilitators prepare sessions case by case. Both programmes require specific training, as mandated by the Department of Social Development, to facilitate uniform presentation and implementation of the programme.

In view of the identified differences between the two programmes it may be advantageous to consider exposing all participants to the life-skills programme as a baseline intervention, and in addition, in certain cases, refer youth to the *VOM* programme by means of which the situation can benefit from the *Victim Offender Mediation*.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the conclusions drawn above, it is recommended that the *Rhythm of Life* programme be considered as a baseline cognitive-behavioural intervention for all reported youth in conflict with the law. This is recommended on the strength of the evidence that more positive pro-social thinking and behaviour seems to be associated with this programme. It is further recommended that the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme be used additionally for cases where contact between the offender and the victim may benefit redress and re-conciliation.

It is furthermore recommended that an aftercare programme for the participants in both programmes be developed to assist in monitoring child-offender behaviour at home and at school as a mechanism for reinforcing behavioural changes. This was formerly known as "home-based supervision" and was found to be an effective method for facilitating more positive family relationships and community support (Roestenburg & Oliphant, 2008). Such strategy may furthermore assist in transforming intervention towards a more community-based strategy as indicated by these authors. Current interventions are mainly driven from service points where youth attend the intervention, and involve little community-based, integrative work with youth. It

is advisable that the current intervention be enhanced by a more integrative, community-based strategy in addition to life-skills training.

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## **SECTION D: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 SUMMARY**

This study investigated the impact of the *Rhythm of Life* skills training programme on a group of youth in diversion within the North West Province. This impact study was preceded by a programme content evaluation phase to ensure relative internal consistency during the impact evaluation trial. During the presentation of content evaluation the focus groups held with presenters of the programme who reviewed the programme contents and delivery mechanism, provided recommendations were made to the presenters of the programme that assisted with refining the presentation of the programme and ensured that relative uniformity could be achieved when presenting the programme for the trial. As comparison, the impact study was conducted against a different diversion intervention known as the *Victim Offender Mediation*.

A quasi-experimental design was utilised with a comparison group consisting of youth in the VOM programme as a “lessor” intervention. The findings of the content evaluation study revealed that Diversion facilitators lacked resources for smooth running of the programme but were able to present it as best as is possible according to the planned schedule. Small refinements were made to the presentation mode and contents of the *Rhythm of Life* programme on the strength of the recommendations of this study and then the programme was presented to the target group. The impact study consisted of a Pre-test and Post-test that was conducted on both groups, as well as a follow-up administration of the research tool at three months’ post programme. Three measurement scales were utilized to evaluate cognitive change in both the experimental and the comparison group, the PICTS, Peer Deviancy Scale (PDS) and the Service Perception Index (SPI).

The researcher was interested in establishing whether the programmes, and specifically the *Rhythm of Life* programme, were able to reduce criminal thinking in the participants and the future forming of criminal thinking patterns, hypothesis was that life-skills programmes should be able to prevent criminal thinking patterns from developing in youth, as this might, consistent with international literature, lead to recidivism and further offending behaviour. This study revealed that both the *Rhythm of Life* and the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme, in spite of differences in approach, generally assisted youth in reducing their pro-criminal attitudes towards crime. However, some nuances differed significantly between the two programmes. Banse et al. (2013) found that most offender diversion treatment programmes tend to reduce the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law. However, no final confirmation exists that intervention

programmes intended to reduce the pro-criminal attitudes are efficient and effective in reducing recidivism. Unfortunately, the effect size of the impact of intervention programmes on pro-criminal attitudes and recidivism was not identified in these studies. Within the current study, effect size played a significant role in the interpretation of data.

### **6.1.1 Discussion of findings**

Phase 1 was conducted by means of focus groups. In focus groups, the population consisted of eight facilitators of the *Rhythm of Life* diversion programme in the North West Province from three different selected service points, (Tswaing Service Point, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa). All the participants were qualified social workers with more than two years of experience as generic social workers, some working as probation officers and Crime prevention coordinators. All the participants implementing the diversion programme have been trained in presenting the programme and some were master trainers of the programme. They further indicated that it is difficult for them as implementers to implement the programme due to inadequate resources. The participants mentioned that content of the *Rhythm of Life* manual is good; hence activities need time so that the youth can understand the message of criminal activities and the consequences thereof.

The data analysis was produced following seven themes. Data from literature were used to substantiate the findings during a literature control, and direct responses were point out that the findings from relevant studies should be analysed and arranged in accordance with the themes and sub-themes that emanate from the data and not simply reported in a regimental fashion.

Phase two was a quantitative study whereby the researcher collected data by utilizing three scales. The offenders in the ROL programme were more hardened and had committed more severe offences, compared to the VOM. However, the ROL programme was more effective in reducing three dimensions of criminal thinking, namely Super-optimism, Cognitive Indolence and cut-off. The dismissing of major events, such as an offence as something insignificant is referred to as Cut-off. In contrast, the VOM programme seemed more effective in reducing the tendency of faking responses, or infrequency of responding. Alexander et al. (2010) are of the view that the victim offender mediation could change the perceptions of the offenders with regard to the offenders' circumstances. They can also learn from their mistakes and consequently do positive things such as understanding that crime does not pay and the consequences thereof.

The third phase was conducted after three months of completion of the programme for a follow-up interview with the experimental and comparison groups. A definite advantage of the ROL programme was the changes that occurred in post-programme friendships of participants. ROL

was somewhat better at changing relationships with deviant peers as measured by the Peer Deviancy Scale. ROL participants in the qualitative follow-up study commented on the changes that the programme brought about to their life-styles, specifically in the roles they play at school, and the friends they hang out with, including the tasks they perform in their home environment. These findings are significant, considering the expected emphasis of cognitive-behavioural interventions on changing life-styles in youth. It was the aim of this study to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the impact of ROL on the PCAs of children in conflict with the law. Furthermore, the study indicates that the ROL has a positive impact in decreasing the PCAs of youth in conflict with the law.

In the qualitative study some of the youth admitted to using substances such as dagga and alcohol on an experimental level before joining the intervention programmes. It is concluded that offending behaviour was due to the result of problematic substance abuse patterns combined with other socio-economic and environmental circumstances. As a result of behavioural patterns, the children scientifically lost respect for their parents and educators. While several participants reported that they had changed their behaviour by attending either the *Rhythm of Life* programme or the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme. Put in a nutshell, it appears that such behavioural change should be regarded as an initial response; perhaps initiated by being under pressure of the justice system. The majority of the participants confirmed significant behavioural changes, regardless of which programme they had attended, making it somewhat difficult to compare and contrast the two programmes.

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

South Africa has experienced significant growth in the number and scope of diversion programmes for youth in conflict with the law. The Diversion programme has been tested nationally and internationally by different researchers. The *Rhythm of Life* programme has strength and challenges according to the programme facilitators. The facilitators appear to be competent to implement the programmes (*Rhythm of Life* and *Victim Offender Mediation*) applying different skills while implementing the content of the programme; also presentation skills of the programmes. Their training appears relevant to enable them to present the programme. This study did not aim at evaluating the training skills or abilities of presenters, as we only examined programme contents. This could be a topic for a different study. It is vital for the quality of the administration of youth justice that all the professionals involved in social services, law enforcement, legal profession, prosecution and judiciary receive appropriate training on the programmes and Act, for effective service delivery (Badenhorst, 2012). The *Rhythm of Life* programme assists youth in reducing Pro-criminal attitudes. Most youth realized the importance of changing their attitudes and behaviour through Departmental diversion programmes.

The programme makes a difference in reducing youth offender's tendencies to fake, to take shortcuts, to respond infrequently and also to hang out with the wrong and manipulative friends. It also assists children with their pro-criminal attitudes towards crime in that it changes their attitudes and beliefs regarding criminal thinking. This refers to the way children view crime in their daily lives. This was confirmed by youth during qualitative interviews and explanations of changing their lifestyles into better. In the experimental group the number of friends decreased from pre-test to post-test due to the ROL programme. However, in the comparison group it increased from pre-test to post-test.

Some of the youth from the *Rhythm of Life* programme as well as those from the *VOM* programme indicated that they were members of gang groups; hence the programmes assisted them in modifying their behaviour. Diesel (1997), cited in Smith (2010), disputes that in schools, gangs must be perceived as a problem in the community of South Africa. Although schools form part of the community at large, they remain to be problems to the community. This indicates that if there is a gang in the community, the members of the community are the ones to suffer the results of crime and gangsterism. The Cape Argus (2012) indicated that violence falls over into schools because the area is part of gang territory; gangsters are fighting for rewards, meaning that the majority of gang members or rings are mostly found in schools.

Gang groups like to control or exercise their powers in large areas, usually communities or some parts of towns and cities. Prior to joining the *Rhythm of Life* or the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme, the youth were from the experimental and comparison programme used substances such as dagga, this, along with peer pressure, resulted in them eventually committing different types of crime. The youth offenders and those at risk stated that they were assisted by the *Rhythm of Life* and the *VOM* facilitators respectively, who are qualified social workers. These facilitators have more than two years' experience as social workers and also are well-capacitated in respect of diversion programmes. All the research questions were answered with regard to phases 1, 2 and 3 of the research. In a nutshell, the researcher managed to answer the evaluation of the impact of a diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law by means of data collection and analysis of the research project. Also all the research questions were answered in this research project by means of quantitative and qualitative interviews.

### **6.3 LIMITATIONS**

It is possible that the results of this study may be limited due to the following reasons:

- The study was focused on youth in conflict with the law and also at risk. However, some of the youth from the experimental and the comparison group dropped out from the programme due to their personal circumstances.

- Although the study is limited by small numbers, it was still possible to investigate programme effects and contrast two programme options over time.
- The interviews were conducted at school due to Departmental strike or labour unrest.
- The diversion facilitators in the North West from the Tswaing, Ratlou and Ramotshere-Moiloa service points were interviewed. However, other service points in the North West Province were excluded.
- These Service points were selected for the study because they are rural in nature and most of the community members originate from neighbouring farms.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATION**

This study contributed to the improvement of the lives of the youth in conflict with the law and of those at risk. The majority of these participants responded positively to the implementation and interventions of the programmes. The programmes also made a difference in changing the criminal thinking of these youth towards crime because they mentioned that they had benefited from the programmes (ROL and VOM). The impact of the diversion programme is engaging emphasis on the rehabilitation and reintegration of the youth offenders who are in conflict with the law Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008). This study is valuable for the social workers because they made a difference in the lives of children by assisting in changing the youth's potentially dangerous and negative thinking patterns towards crime. The programme must be presented consistently the same as far as possible in order for the youth to realise the importance of attendance. The following recommendations are made with regard to the findings of Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Diversion programme:

### **6.4.1 Programmatic Recommendations**

In terms of resources for implementation of the diversion programme, the following recommendations can be made:

- It is thus recommended that implementers of the Diversion programme be provided with resources.
- According to the Child Justice Act (Act 75 of 2008) Sec 56(2)(a), the cabinet member responsible for social development, in consultation with the cabinet members responsible for the administration of justice, education, correctional services, safety and security and health must ensure the availability of resources to implement diversion programmes, as prescribed.

- The Department of Social Development should avail the *Rhythm of Life* resources at all times for the effectiveness of the implementation of the programme.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations regarding youth in conflict with the law and those at risk:**

- Youth and caregivers should continuously be informed about the seriousness of the diversion programme and the consequences with regard to the compliance order.
- Youth in conflict with the law and also those at risk should be provided with food or snacks because they attend the programme after school hours. If they start at their respective home for food, this will result in ascendance or arriving late for the sessions.
- Youth should be provided with counselling, especially those who are traumatized by the offence committed.
- Parents of youth in conflict with the law and also those at risk should be capacitated on parenting skills. Steyn (2010) cautions that lack of parental involvement has a negative impact on how newly learned skills are implemented at home. The youth offender might be rehabilitated through the diversion programme, but return back, after programme completion, to the same conditions or environment that resulted in their problem behaviour. It is of utmost importance for parents to fully participate in and support the rehabilitation process of the youth offenders. If not, the parents' failure to participate in the rehabilitation process of their children might reduce the positive impact and effectiveness of the diversion programme.
- Parents and teachers must support youth and make them aware of criminal activities and the negative results thereof.
- Youth progress must be monitored, and the programme must be evaluated at regular intervals.

#### **6.4.3 Recommendation with regard to programme facilitators:**

- Probation officers as programme facilitators should assist the youth and caregivers in creating peer support groups.
- Facilitators can create separate support groups for the programme accredited be taken into consideration the youth in line with the offence committed.
- Facilitators should be capacitated to present the *Victim Offender Mediation* programme and the accreditation of the programme should be considered.

- Programme facilitators should conduct a follow-up/monitoring of programme implementation so as to ensure programme effectiveness. This can be done by means of community-based follow-up sessions with family members and the youth included, monitoring and motivating positive changes that had been achieved.
- It is recommended that the PICTS scale be used in future assessment of youth who need to attend diversion programmes. The value of the scale lies in the concrete information it provides regarding a person's thinking and attitude regarding crime. This study has shown the potential of knowing what changes to look out for in youth. We now know that the *Rhythm of Life* programme is capable of changing some aspects of thinking such as super-optimism, short-cut behaviour and dismissal thinking. These are important indicators of change for practice. The dimensions mentioned here are critical cognitive indicators of change in youth because they seem to be interrelated and related to tendencies of developing destructive behaviour patterns, relationships with wrong friends and oppositional behaviour in the home environment. Thus, by assessing these dimensions in future, will enable social workers to reflect more critically on these tendencies in youth, develop more appropriate interventions and monitor these changes in future intervention.
- The PICTS scale provides valuable indicators overall, of youth behaviour and thinking in relation to offending. Considering that social work assessments at DSD are currently done without a standardized assessment instrument, the use of such instrument may directly impact the quality of direct practice with youth.
- By performing regular pre- and post-intervention assessments and comparing results for each dimension on PICTS will assist with evaluating change on an individual level for each youth assessed. It is recommended that more scientific practice be stimulated by training facilitators in the use of the PICTS.
- The PICTS dimensions provide an excellent indication of areas requiring further work.

#### **6.4.4 Recommendations on what should be done to reduce programme dropout**

- Youth and family members should be educated on the processes and consequences of diversion before commencing with the programme.
- Probation officers should screen youth after receiving Diversion orders (Form 6) from court.
- One-on-one and smaller group interventions should be organized and facilitated by the diversion facilitators when youth offenders are waiting to be placed in a programme.

- Youth should be provided with food during the session because most of them attend the programme after school hours.
- The availability and accessibility of psycho-social support services for youth should be improved.

#### **6.4.5 Aftercare Programme:**

- An aftercare programme should be implemented for youth in conflict with the law after completion of their programme
- An aftercare programme will help to monitor the behaviour and attitudes of the youth at their respective homes and schools.
- More officials should be appointed for aftercare implementation.
- Family interventions and support are needed for aftercare services.
- Youth and caregivers should be linked to the basic, social work support services in the areas in which they reside.
- Youth, who had completed the diversion programmes, should be trained and utilised to provide their peers with support.

#### **6.4.6 Recommendation with regard to the diversion (Rhythm of Life) manual:**

- Modules must be revisited in order for youth to better understand it.
- Time slots for the facilitation of the programmes should be reconsidered, especially with regard to the implementation of programme activities.
- More time is needed when utilising the manual for youth for them to understand the programme.

#### **6.4.7 Suggestions for Further Researcher**

DSD under 12 diversion programmes and other diversion for youth above 14 years of age were not included. However, it will be vital for other researcher to evaluate the impact of four diversions therapeutic programmes of under 12 children in conflict with the law and also four diversion therapeutic programmes of above 14 years. Comparison to be done for the in-house diversion and service provider's diversion programmes.

The Department of Social Development should revisit the issue of facilitating and accrediting the diversion programme as custodians because it can result in conflict of interest. Findings of this study indicated that resources for the programme effectiveness are lacking.

The facilitators of Diversion programme to consider the above mentioned recommendation in future in order to assist them on how best the programme can be implemented.

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# ANNEXURE A: HREC ETHICAL APPROVAL



Prof WJH Roestenburg  
Social Work  
COMPRES

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222  
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research,  
Training and Support

Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)  
Tel: 018-265 2291  
Email: [Wayne.Towers@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Wayne.Towers@nwu.ac.za)

4 July 2018

Dear Prof Roestenburg

## APPROVAL OF YOUR APPLICATION BY THE HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC) OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Ethics number: NWU-00019-18-S1

Kindly use the ethics reference number provided above in all future correspondence or documents submitted to the administrative assistant of the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) secretariat.

**Study title:** The impact of a diversion programme on children in conflict with the law: North West Province

**Study leader:** Prof WJH Roestenburg

**Student:** TS Motshedi-16726626

**Application type:** Single study

**Risk level:** Phase 1 (Adult) – Minimal, Phase 2 (Children) – Category 2 Greater than minimal with direct benefit, Phase 3 (Children) – Category 3 Greater than minimal with no benefit (monitoring report required six-monthly)

**Expiry date:** 30 July 2018 (monitoring reports are due at the end of February and July annually until completion)

You are kindly informed that after review by the HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences, North-West University, your ethics approval application has been successful and was determined to fulfil all requirements for approval. Your study is approved for a year and may commence from 04 July 2018. It, however, requires the following further conditions specific to *the progress* of the study:

- a. Please submit a copy of the updated diversion programme manual, to the HREC for approval before implementation in the study.
- b. Please submit the final interview schedules for the focus group discussions in phase 1 of the study and the in-depth interviews during Phase 3 of the study, to the HREC for approval before implementation in the study.
- c. Please submit a copy of the final questionnaires to be used in Phase 2 of the study, to the HREC for approval before implementation in the study.

As the study progresses the aforementioned conditions should be submitted to [Ethics-HRECProcess@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics-HRECProcess@nwu.ac.za) with a cover letter with a specific subject title indicating "Outstanding documents for approval: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX." The letter should include the title of the approved study, the names of the researchers involved, that the documents are being submitted as part of the conditions of the approval set by the HREC, the nature of the document i.e. which condition is being fulfilled and any further explanation to clarify the submission.

The e-mail, to which you attach the documents that you send, should have a *specific subject line* indicating the nature of the submission e.g. "Outstanding documents for approval: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX". The e-mail should indicate the nature of the document being sent. This submission will be handled via the expedited process.

Continuation of the study is dependent on receipt of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation. A monitoring report should be submitted two months prior to the reporting dates as indicated i.e. annually for minimal risk studies, six-monthly for medium risk studies and three-monthly for high risk studies, to ensure timely renewal of the study. A final report must be provided at completion of the study or the HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences must be notified if the study is temporarily suspended or terminated. The monitoring report template is obtainable from the Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support at [Ethics-HRECMonitoring@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics-HRECMonitoring@nwu.ac.za). Annually, a number of studies may be randomly selected for an internal audit.

The HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences requires immediate reporting of any aspects that warrants a change of ethical approval. Any amendments, extensions or other modifications to the proposal or other associated documentation must be submitted to the HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences prior to implementing these changes. These requests should be submitted to [Ethics-HRECApplied@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics-HRECApplied@nwu.ac.za) with a cover letter with a specific subject title indicating, "Amendment request: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX". The letter should include the title of the approved study, the names of the researchers involved, the nature of the amendment/s being made (indicating what changes have been made as well as where they have been made), which documents have been attached and any further explanation to clarify the amendment request being submitted. The amendments made should be indicated in **yellow highlight** in the amended documents. The e-mail, to which you attach the documents that you send, should have a *specific subject line* indicating that it is an amendment request e.g. "Amendment request: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX". This e-mail should indicate the nature of the amendment. This submission will be handled via the expedited process.

Any adverse/unexpected/unforeseen events or incidents must be reported on either an adverse event report form or incident report form to [Ethics-HRECIncident-SAE@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics-HRECIncident-SAE@nwu.ac.za). The e-mail, to which you attach the documents that you send, should have a specific subject line indicating that it is a notification of a serious adverse event or incident in a specific project e.g. "SAE/Incident notification: NWU-XXXXX-XX-XX". Please note that the HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.

The HREC, Faculty of Health Sciences complies with the South African National Health Act 61 (2003), the Regulations on Research with Human Participants (2014), the Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes (2015), the Belmont Report and the Declaration of Helsinki (2013).

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support at [Ethics-HRECApplied@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Ethics-HRECApplied@nwu.ac.za).

Yours sincerely



Prof Wayne Towers  
HREC Chairperson



Prof Minnie Greeff  
Ethics Office Head

Current details: (20230522) G:\My Drive\9. Research and Postgraduate Education\9.1.5 Ethics\NWU-00019-18-519.1.5.4.1\_AI\_NWU-00019-18-51-04-07-2018.docx  
4 July 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.1

# ANNEXURE B: NORTH WEST DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL LETTER



social development

Department:  
Social Development  
North West Provincial Government  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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## CHIEF DIRECTORATE: DISTRICTS & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

Private Bag X 6 • Mmabatho, 2735 • Provident House Building, University Drive • MMABATHO  
Tel: +27 (18) 388 – 5718/18 • Fax: +27 (18) 384 – 5967 • E-mail: kkgobe@nwpg.gov.za

---

**TO :** MS. TSHEPISO MOTSHEDI  
Phd STUDENT – POTCHEFSTROOM UNIVERSITY

**FROM :** MR. J. ENGEL  
SERVICE POINT MANAGER

**DATE :** 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018

**SUBJECT :** LETTER OF APPROVAL

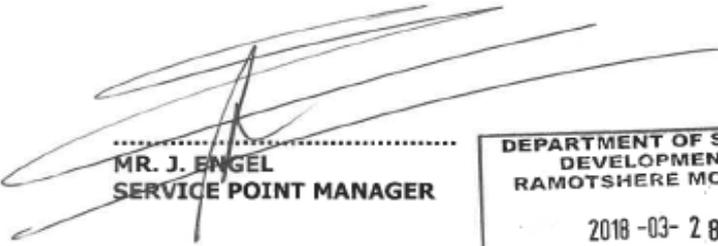
Hereby permission granted to conduct research at the above Service Point.

Please contact Mr. Mpuma directly for logistical arrangements.

His cell number is 082 324 3202.

Grant me the opportunity to wish you all the best with your studies.

Yours Sincerely,

  
.....  
MR. J. ENGEL  
SERVICE POINT MANAGER





social development

Department:  
Social Development  
North West Provincial Government  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



---

**CHIEF DIRECTORATE: DISTRICTS & INSTITUTIONAL  
SUPPORT MANAGEMENT**

Private Bag X 6 ■ Mmabatho, 2735 ■ Provident House Building, University Drive ■ MMABATHO  
Tel: +27 (18) 388 – 5719/18 ■ Fax: +27 (18) 384 – 5967 ■ E-mail: kkgobe@nwpg.gov.za

---

**TO : MS. TSHEPISO MOTSHEDI  
Phd STUDENT – POTCHEFSTROOM UNIVERSITY**

**FROM : MR. J. ENGEL  
SERVICE POINT MANAGER**

**DATE : 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018**

**SUBJECT : LETTER OF APPROVAL**

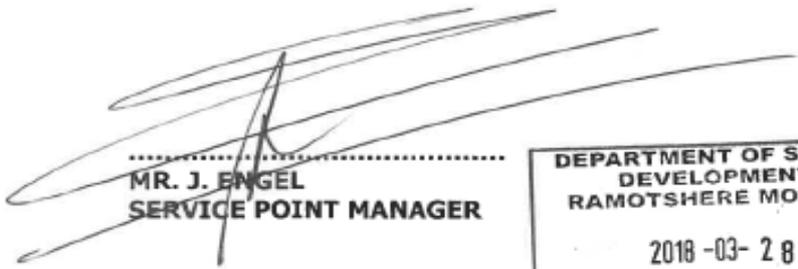
**Hereby permission granted to conduct research at the above Service Point.**

**Please contact Mr. Mpuma directly for logistical arrangements.**

**His cell number is 082 324 3202.**

**Grant me the opportunity to wish you all the best with your studies.**

**Yours Sincerely,**

  
.....  
**MR. J. ENGEL  
SERVICE POINT MANAGER**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
RAMOTSHERE MOILOA**

**2018 -03- 28**

**TEL: 018 642 2911  
FAX: 018 642 1031**





social development

Department:  
Social Development  
North West Provincial Government  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

*Dr. Motshedi, kindly  
prepare approval  
document for AHOE  
22/03/2016*

**CHIEF DIRECTORATE:  
DISTRICTS AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT MANAGEMENT**

Private Bag X 6 ■ Mmabatho, 2735 ■ Provident House Building, University Drive ■ MMABATHO  
Tel: +27 (18) 386 – 5719/18 ■ Fax: +27 (18) 384 – 5967 ■ E-mail: kkoobe@nwpa.gov.za

**TO : MR I MOGOROSI  
CHIEF DIRECTOR: CORPORATE SERVICES**

**FROM : Ms N B NOMNGA  
DIRECTOR: DISTRICT CO-ORDINATION**

**DATE : 17 MARCH 2016**

**SUBJECT : REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN NGAKA MODIRI  
MOLEMA DISTRICT: MS T.S MOTSHEDI**

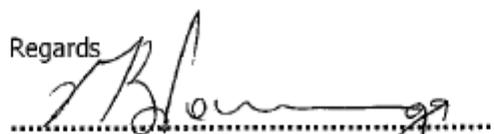
The above matter bears reference.

Please be informed that Ms T.S Motshedi has requested to be granted permission to conduct research in Ngaka Modiri Molema District. The topic of the research is: The impact of Diversion Programme in the North West Province.

The research will focus on three service points, namely Ramotshere Moiloa, Ratlou and Tswaing. The findings will assist the District and Province in rendering efficient Diversion Programmes. Attached is Research Project Application for ease reference.

Hope you find the above in order.

Regards

  
.....  
**NB NOMNGA  
DIRECTOR: DISTRICT CO-ORDINATION**



social development

Department:  
Social Development  
North West Provincial Government  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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## **TSWAING SERVICE POINT**

Private Bag X 0000 ■ Delareyville, 2777 ■ 61 General Delarey ■ DELAREYVILLE  
Tel: +27 (53) 8481126/35 ■ Fax: +27 (53) 848 1247 ■ E-mail: jmogokonyane@nwpg.gov.za

---

Enq: Ms M.J Mogokonyane  
Cell no: 0823294210

**TO: Ms. T.S MOTSHEDI  
SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR GRD 1**

**FROM: Ms. M.J MOGOKONYANE  
SERVICE POINT MANAGER  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**DATE: 27 MARCH 2018**

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY**

This communiqué serves to grant Ms. Tshepiso Motshedi permission to research as per approval from the office of the HOD. The topic is as follows: The impact of Diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law.

She will be provided with the necessary support. Hoping that the findings of this study will be shared in order to further assist the Service Point and the entire Department.

Wishing you all the best.

Yours in service

.....  
**MS. M.J MOGOKONYANE  
(SERVICE POINT MANAGER)**

27/03/2018  
.....  
**DATE**

## ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR FOCUS GROUP

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:** THE IMPACT OF A DIVERSION PROGRAMME ON THE PRO-CRIMINAL ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW.

**ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS:**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Prof W Roestenburg

**POST GRADUATE STUDENT:** TSHEPISO SINAH MOTSHEDI

**ADDRESS:** 61 General Delarey Street, Delareyville, 2770

**CONTACT NUMBER:** 0834046315

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my PhD research. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU 00019-18-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

- **What is this research study all about?**
- *The overall aim of the study is to determine if the “Rhythm of Life” diversion programme is able to change Pro-Criminal Attitudes in youth participants.*
- *Before the above can be achieved, the researcher wants to determine if the programme contents and presentation mechanism has sufficient strength to produce the above intended effect. The researcher want to receive your input regarding changes and*

*improvements you would suggest to better the programme and make it more suitable for presentation to youth.*

- *This study will be conducted at Tswaing, Ratlou or Ramotshere Moiloa Service Point office, depending on your choice and preference.*

#### **Why have you been invited to participate?**

- *You have been invited to be part of this research because of your role in presenting this programme to youth and you have experience in this regard.*
- *Because of your experience you are in an excellent position to evaluate its contents.*
- *You will not be able to take part in this research if you are not employed by DSD or Khulisa or you are not working for Department of Social Development or Khulisa in the North West. Participation is voluntary and if you are not willing to participate in the study you will not be forced to participate.*

#### **What will be expected of you?**

- *You will be expected to keep everything that will be discussed confidential whilst participating in the focus group. The focus group session will last for one to two hours. You will be given an interview schedule with the main questions that will be asked at the focus group. If you have any materials, presentations or content that you would like to add to this discussion you are welcome to bring this on the day.*
- *We would like you to share ideas you may have for the improvement of the impact of the programme, different content or improvements you want to see in the programme.*

#### **Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?**

- *You will gain indirectly by gaining new ideas from others in the group regarding ways they think the programme can be improved.*
- *The other gain of the study is for you to improve the way the programme is implemented.*

#### **Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?**

- *The group conversation has limited confidentiality as participants may share what was discussed in the group, with others.*
- *There are more gains for you in joining this study than there are risks.*

#### **How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?**

- *Anonymity of your findings will be protected by the researcher and research committee and your identity is confidential. Your privacy will be respected by the researcher and everyone who is involved in the study. Your results will be kept confidential by the researcher. Only the researcher, North West Department of Social Development and HRC will be able to look at your findings. Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data it will be password protected. (As soon as data has been transcribed it will be deleted from the recorders.) Data will be stored for 5 years.*

#### **What will happen with the findings or samples?**

- *The findings of this study will only be used for this study.*

#### **How will you know about the results of this research?**

- *The results of this study will be made available to you in the form of an improved "Rhythm of Life" programme, that is given to you after we have added your*

recommendations. The renewed programme will be presented to a group of youth during 2018

**Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?**

This study is not funded

No, you will not be paid to take part in the study because your participation may be regarded as part of your regular duties.

There will thus be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.

**Is there anything else that you should know or do?**

- You can contact Tshepiso Motshedi at **0834046315** if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or [carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

**Declaration by participant**

**By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in the research study titled:** The Impact a Diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law.

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by person obtaining consent**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to  
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of person obtaining consent**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by researcher**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ..... **Or** I had it explained by ..... who I trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them  
Or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**



### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR CHILDREN

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: THE IMPACT OF A DIVERSION PROGRAMME ON THE PRO-CRIMINAL ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW.**

**ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS:**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof W Roestenburg**

**POST GRADUATE STUDENT: TSHEPISO SINAH MOTSHEDI**

**ADDRESS: 61 General Delarey street, Delareyville, 2770**

**CONTACT NUMBER: 0834046315**

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my PhD degree at Northwest University. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. You should be fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and the role you may play in it. Your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00019-18-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

#### **What is this research study all about?**

- *This research is done to test if the “Rhythm of Life” has an impact on you as a participant in the programme. The researcher want to study the effectiveness of the programme in improving young people’s way of life after completing the programme. If we know that the programme works, we can improve it for other young people who attend it in future.*

- *This study will be conducted at Tswaing, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa Service Points offices whilst you attend group sessions as part of your diversion conditions.*
- *The researcher are not affiliated to DSD in any way and we are completely independent from them.*
- *We plan to study and interview 30 children conflict with the law who are 14-17 years of age*

Why have you been invited to participate?

- *You have been invited to be part of this research because you are being exposed to the “Rhythm of Life” diversion programme as you were sent by court to attend programmes. Only children who committed crime and referred by court will be included.*
- *You are also between 14 – 17 years of age and from this area.*

What will be expected of you?

- *You will be expected to attend and participate in eight group sessions for 40 minutes at a time. The programme will require you to attend for eight weeks, so this means 320 minutes. You must keep everything that will be discussed confidential. It is important that you attend all the sessions to gain as much as possible.*
- *For the research you will be expected to complete a questionnaire three times during the period of services you get from DSD: 1) At the beginning of the programme; 2) at the end of the programme; 3) at three months after completion of the programme. At this time, you will also participate in an interview with the researcher regarding your feelings about the programme. This interview may last up to one hour.*
- *We also require you to give us permission to extract certain information from your case file that is kept by your social worker at the service point. We will extract this information carefully and store it on a computer without using your name. We will give a code to your information so that nobody will be able to recognize you in any way.*

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

- *You may gain from participating in the research in that you may have a better understanding of your own circumstances and how these influence your attitudes towards crime.*
- *You also get an opportunity to discuss your thoughts and feelings about the “Rhythm of Life” programme with the researcher.*

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- *Some sessions may cause you to become emotional, but the presenter of the programme will assist you should this happen. In case of any discomfort; your Probation Officer will take you to the local clinic or hospital and talk and listen to you in a counselling session. You may get tired during the session and breaks will be given between the sessions during which you will receive refreshments.*
- *There are more gains for you in joining this study than there are risks.*

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- *We will not place your name on any of our documentation so you cannot be recognized by us. Your privacy will be respected by the researcher and everyone who is involved in the study. We will not share your information or whatever information you share with us, with anybody outside. The last interview we have will you will be recorded on a digital recorder. After we have made a written copy of what you have said on recorder, we will delete the recording. We will not use your name at all. The researcher will compile a research report that is sent to DSD. Nothing in the report will identify any participants.*

*Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer.*

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- *The findings of this study will only be used for this study.*

How will you know about the results of this research?

- *We will give you the results of this research by the end of September 2018.*
- *You will be given two short reports after completing the research. These two reports will be given to you by your social worker in a sealed envelope.*

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

*This study is not funded*

*No you will not be paid to take part in the study.*

*There will thus be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.*

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Tshepiso Motshedi at 0834046315 if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or [carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

## **Declaration by participant**

**By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in the research study titled: The Impact a Diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law.**

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by person obtaining consent**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to .....  
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of person obtaining consent**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by researcher**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ..... **Or** I had it explained by ..... who I trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**



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**Setempe sa HREC**

**DITOKOMANE TSA TUMELELO KA KITSO TSA BANA(SETLHOPHA SA DITEKELETSO,  
"RYTHM OF LIFE")**

**LEINA LA THUTO YA PATLISISO: KUTLWALO YA LENANE LA PHAPOSO MO  
MAITSHWARONG A TUMELELO YA BOGODU MO BANENG BA BA THULANANG LE  
MOLAO.**

**NOMORO YA TSHUPETSO YA DIETIKI: (NWU-00019-18-S1)**

**MMATLISISI WA PORINSIPALA: Mop W Roestenburg**

**MOITHUTI MORAGO GA KALOGO: TSHEPISO SINAH MOTSHEDI**

**ATERESE: 61 Seterata sa General Delarey, Delareyville, 2770**

**DINOMORO TSA MOGALA TSA GO IKGOLAGANYA: 0834046315**

O lalediwa go nna le seabe mo thutong ya patlisiso e e leng karolo ya dikerii ya PhD ya me mo Yunibesithing ya Bokone-Bophirima. Ka kopo tsaya nako go buisa tshedimosetso e e fiwang fa, e e tla tlhalosang dintlha tsa ithuto e. Ka kopo, kopa motho yo o tlhalosang patlisiso e mo go wena potso nngwe le nngwe ka ga karolo nngwe le nngwe ya ithuto e o sa e tlhloganyeng gotlhelele. O tshwanetse go dula o kgotsofetse gore o tlhloganya sentle gore patlisiso e e ka ga eng le gore wena o tsaya karolo efe mo go yone. Go tsaya karolo ga gago ke ka go ithaopa gotlhelele mme o na le kgololesego ya go ka gana go tsaya karolo. Fa o dira tshwetso ya go gana go nna le seabe, seo ga se kitla se go ama ka mokgwa o o sa siamang gope. O na le kgololesego gape go ikgogela morago go tswa mo thutong nako e nngwe kampo e nngwe le fa o ka dumela go tsena jaanong jaana.

Patlisiso e e dumeletswe ke Komiti ya Dietiki tsa Patlisiso ya Botho mo Legorong la Disaense tsa Pholo ya Yunibesithing ya Bokone-Bophirima (NWU-00019-18-S1) mme e tllile go tsamaisiwa go ya ka dikaedi tsa seetiki le melaometheo ya Dietiki mo Patlisisong ya Pholo: Melaometheo, Ditirego le Dithulaganyo (DoH, 2015) le dikaedi tse dingwe tsa boditshabatshaba tsa seetiki tse

dingwe tse di maleba mo thutong e. Gongwe go ka tlhokega gore maloko a komiti ya dietiki tsa patlisiso kgotsa batho ba bangwe ba ba lebaneng go tla go tlhatlhoba direkoto tsa patlisiso.

### **Thuto e ya patlisiso e e ka ga eng?**

- *Patlisiso e e diriswa go lekeletsa gore a "Rhythm of Life" e na le kutlwalo mo go wena o le motsayakarolo mo lenaneng. Babatlisisi ba batla go ithuta bononofo jwa lenane la go tokafatsa maphelo a bašwa le mokgwa wa go phela ga bone morago ga go fetsa lenane. Fa re ka itse gore lenane le a dira, re ka e tokafaletsa bašwa ba bangwe ba ba le tsenang mo bokamosong.*
- *Ithuto e e tla direlwa kwa Diofising tsa Dintlha tsa Ditirelo kwa Tswaing, Ratlou le Ramotshere Moiloa ka nako e wena o tsenang dikopano tsa karolo ya mabaka a a beilweng a phaposo.*
- *Babatlisisi ga ba karolo ya sepe ya DSD ka mokgwa ope mme re ipusa gotlhelele kwa ntle ga bone.*
- *Re na le leano la go ithuta le go tshwara therisano le bana ba le 30 ba ba thulaneng le molao ba ba mo gare ga dilemo di le 14-17.*

Goreng wena o kopilwe gore o tseye karolo mo patlisisong?

- *O laleditswe go nna karolo ya patlisiso e ka gonne o le mongwe yo o dirisaneng le lenane la phaposo la "Rhythm of Life" mme o rometswe ke kgotla go tsena manane. Ke bana fela ba ba dirileng tshenyo le ba ba rometsweng ke kgotla ba ba tla tsenngwang.*
- *Gape wena o magareng a dilemo di le 14 - 17 mme o wa tikologo e.*

Go tla batliwa eng mo go wena?

- *O tla batliwa gore o tsene mme o tseye karolo mo dikopanong tsa setlhopha di le robedi tse di leng botelele jwa metsotso e le 40 e nngwe le e nngwe. Lenane le tla go batla gore o tsene dikopano tsa dibeke di le robedi mme se se dira metsotso e le 320. O tshwanetse go tshwara gotlhe se se tla buisanwang ka khupamarama. Go botlhokwa thata gore o tsene dikopano tsotlhe gore o amogele poelo le thuto e ntsi jaaka go ka kgonagala.*
- *Mo patlisisong o tla solofelwa gore o tlatse dipotsopatlisiso gararo mo nakong ya go amogela ditirelo go tswa go DSD: 1) Mo tshimologong ya lenane; 2) mo bokhutlong jwa lenane; 3) dikgwedi tse tharo morago ga go fetsa lenane. Ka nako e o tla tsaya karolo gape mo therisanong le mmatlisisi ka ga maikutlo a gago ka ga lenane. Therisano e e tla tsaya nako e e ka nnang ura e le nngwe.*
- *Gape re go tlhoka gore o re fe tumelelo go ntsha tshedimosetso nngwe go tswa mo faeleng ya gago ya kgetsi e e tshwarwang ke modirediloago wa gago kwa ntlheng ya tirelo. Re ka ntsha tshedimosetso ka kelotlhoko mme re e boloke mo khomphiutareng kwa ntle ga go dirisa leina la gago. Re tla fa tshedimosetso ya gago khoutu gore go se nne le ope yo a kgonang go lemoga gore ke wena gope.*

A o tla amogela sengwe go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e?

- *O tla tswelwa mosola ka go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong ka go tlhologanya mabaka le bophelo jwa gago le gore dilo tse tsotlhe di rotloetsa jang maitshwaro a gago ka ga tshenyo.*
- *Gape o tla na le tšhono ya go buisana dikakanyo le maikutlo a gago ka ga lenane la "Rhythm of Life" le babatlisisi.*

A go na le ditekeletso ka go tsaya karolo ga gago mo patlisisong e mme go ka diriswa eng go di thibeleda?

- *Dikopano dingwe di tla fudua maikutlo a gago mme motlhagisi wa lenane o tla go ema nokeng fa se se ka diragala. Fa e le gore go ka na le maikutlo a mathata: Ofisiri wa*

*gago wa pakateko o tla go isa kwa tleliniking ya selegae kgotsa kwa sepetleleng mme a bue le wena mme a go reetse mme le kopanele nako ya kgakololo. O ka iphitlhela o lapile ka dinako tsa dikopano mme o tla fiwa nako ya go ikhutsa mo gare ga dikopano mme o tla fiwa le dilapolosi.*

- *Thuto e e go tswela mosola go feta go na le gore e go tlietse ditekeletso.*

Re ka sireletsa jang bokhupamarama jwa gago mme ke mang a tla kgonang go bona diphithlelelo tsa gago?

- *Re ka se tsenye leina la gago gope mo ditokomaneng tsa rona go tthamamisa gore ga o itsiwe ke ope. Bonosi jwa gago bo tla tlotliwa ke mmatlisisi le mongwe le mongwe yo o tsayang karolo mo ithutong. Re ka se fetise tshedimosetso ya gago kampo e nngwe le e nngwe e o re e fang le motho ope kwa ntle. Therisano ya bofelo e re tla e tshwarang le wena e tla rekotiwa ka segatisamodumo. Morago ga gore re dire khopi ya teng ya go kwalola kgatiso, kgatiso e tla phimolwa. Ga re tle go dirisa leina la gago gope. Babatlisisi ba tla tlhama pego ya patlisiso e e tla romelwang kwa DSD. Ga go sepe se se leng teng mo teng ga pego se se ka dirang gore go lemogwe gore motsayakarolo ke mang. Diphithlelelo tsa dikhopi tsa dipampiri di tla bolokwa mme di tla lotlelelwa mo dikobotlong mo ofising ya mmatlisisi mme data ya seileketeroniki e tla bolokwa mo khomphiuthareng ka lefoko la senotlolo.*

Go tla diriwa eng ka diphithlelelo kampo disampole tse di amogetsweng?

- *Diphithlelelo tsa thuto e di tla dirisiwa fela mo thutong e.*

O ka itse jang ka diphetho tsa patlisiso e?

- *Re tla go fa diphetho tsa patlisiso e ka nako ya bokhutlo jwa kgwedi ya Lwetse 2018.*
- *O tla fiwa dipego di le pedi tse di khutshwane morago ga gore patlisiso e fetswe. Dipego tse pedi tse di tla go fiwa ke modirediloago wa gago di le mo teng ga enfelopo e e tswetsweng.*

A o tliile go duelwa go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong mme a o ka na le ditshenyegelo?

*Ithuto e ga se e e emilweng nokeng ka ditšhelete.*

*Ga o ketla o duelwa sepe go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong.*

*Go ka se nne le ditshenyegelo dipe mo go wena fa o tsaya karolo mo ithutong.*

A go na le sengwe gape se o tlhokang go se itse le go se dira?

- *O ka ikgolaganya le Tshepiso Motshedi kwa 0834046315 fa o ka na le dipotso dingwe go feta kgotsa o na le mathata mangwe.*
- *Gape o ka ikopantsha le Komiti ya Dietiki tsa Patlisiso ya Pholo kwa go Moh Carolien van Zyl kwa go 018 299 1206 kampo ka eposo kwa go carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za fa e le gore o na le dingongorego kampo mabaka a a sa arabiwang sentle ka patlisiso.*
- *O tliile go amogela sekaelo sa foromo eno ya tumelelo gore o e ipolokele yone.*

## **Polelo ya Motsayakarolo**

**Ka go saena tokomane e, nna ..... ke dumela go tsaya karolo mo ithutong ya patlisiso e e bidiwang: Kutlwalo ya Lenane la Phaposo mo maitshwarong a tumelelo ya bogodu mo baneng ba ba thulanang le molao.**

Ke dira boipolelo gore:

- Ke buisitse tshedimosetso e / e ntlhaloseditswe ke motho yo o tshepagalang ka puo e ke e itseng sentle e ke siameng ka yone.
- Patlisiso e ntlhaloseditswe sentle.
- Ke nnile le tshono ya go ka botsa dipotso batho ba babedi, e bong motho wa go tlatsa foromo ya tumelelo le nna le gape mo mmatlising mme dipotso tsa me tsotlhe di ile tsa arajwa.
- Ke tlhaloganya gape gore thuto e ke ya go ithaopa mme ga ke a gatelelwa gope go tsaya karolo.
- Ke ka tlhophisa go tlogela thuto nako e nngwe le e nngwe mme ga ke ketla ke tsholwa ka mokgwa o o sa siamang fa ke dira jalo.
- Ke ka kopiwa gore ke tswe mo thutong pele e fetswa fa e le gore mmatlisisi o ikutlwa gore se go ntshiametse kampo fa ke sa latele leano la thuto jaaka go latela se ke se dumeletseng.

E saenilwe kwa [lefelu] ..... ka (letlha)  
..... 20.....

.....  
**Mosaeno wa motsayakarolo**

.....  
**Mosaeno wa Mosupi**

### **Polelo ya Motho yo go Dirwang Tumelelo mo go Ene**

Nna (leina) ..... ke bolelela gore:

- Ke tlhalositse sentle le ka nepagalo tshedimosetso ya tokomane e go motsayakarolo: .....
- .....
- Ke dirisitse / ga ke a dirisa mofetoledi.
- Ke mo tlhotlheletse go botsa dipotso mme ke tsere nako go di araba.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore ene o tlhaloganya dintlha tsotlhe tsa mabaka a patlisiso jaaka go tlhaloseditswe fa godimo
- Ke mo file le nako go se buisana le ba bangwe fa a ne a ka rata go dira jalo.

E saenilwe kwa [lefelu] ..... ka (letlha)  
..... 20.....

**Polelo ya Mmatlisisi**

Nna (leina) ..... ke bolelela gore:

- Ke tlhalositse tshedimose tso ya tokomane e go motsayakarolo  
..... Kgotsa, Ke katisitse  
..... gore a e ntlhalosetse motsayakarolo.
- Ke dirisitse / ga ke a dirisa mofetoledi.
- Ke mo tlhotlheletse go botsa dipotso mme ke tsere nako go di araba.  
kgotsa ke ne ke le teng fa a ne a ka rata go botsa dipotso dingwe.
- Foromo ya tumelelo e amogetswe ke motho yo o ipusang.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore ene o tlhaloganya ka go lekana mabaka otlhe a patlisiso jaaka  
go tlhaloseditswe mo godimo.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore ene o nnile le nako go buisana foromo le ba bangwe fa a ne a  
rata go ka dira jalo.

E saenilwe kwa [lefelu] ..... ka (letlha)  
..... 20.....

**Setempe sa HREC**

**DITOKOMANE TSA TUMELELO KA KITSO TSA BANA(SETLHOPHA SA TAOLO, LENANE LA "VICTIM-OFFENDER MEDIATION")**

**LEINA LA THUTO YA PATLISISO: KUTLWALO YA LENANE LA PHAPOSO MO MAITSHWARONG A TUMELELO YA BOGODU MO BANENG BA BA THULANANG LE MOLAO.**

**NOMORO YA TSHUPETSO YA DIETIKI: (NWU-00019-18-S1)**

**MMATLISISI WA PORINSIPALA: Mop W Roestenburg**

**MOITHUTI MORAGO GA KALOGO: TSHEPISO SINAH MOTSHEDI**

**ATERESE: 61 Seterata sa General Delarey, Delareyville, 2770**

**DINOMORO TSA MOGALA TSA GO IKGOLAGANYA: 0834046315**

O lalediwa go nna le seabe mo thutong ya patlisiso e e leng karolo ya dikerii ya PhD ya me mo Yunibesithing ya Bokone-Bophirima. Ka kopo tsaya nako go buisa tshedimosetso e e fiwang fa, e e tla tlhalosang dintlha tsa ithuto e. Ka kopo, kopa motho yo o tlhalosang patlisiso e mo go wena potso nngwe le nngwe ka ga karolo nngwe le nngwe ya ithuto e o sa e tlhologanyeng gotlhelele. O tshwanetse go dula o kgotsofetse gore o tlhologanya sentle gore patlisiso e e ka ga eng le gore wena o tsaya karolo efe mo go yone. Go tsaya karolo ga gago ke ka go ithaopa gotlhelele mme o na le kgololesego ya go ka gana go tsaya karolo. Fa o dira tshwetso ya go gana go nna le seabe, seo ga se kitla se go ama ka mokgwa o o sa siamang gope. O na le kgololesego gape go ikgogela morago go tswa mo thutong nako e nngwe kampo e nngwe le fa o ka dumela go tsena jaanong jaana.

Patlisiso e e dumeletswe ke Komiti ya Dietiki tsa Patlisiso ya Botho mo Legorong la Disaense tsa Pholo ya Yunibesithing ya Bokone-Bophirima (NWU-00019-18-S1) mme e tllile go tsamaisiwa go ya ka dikaedi tsa seetiki le melaometheo ya Dietiki mo Patlisisong ya Pholo: Melaometheo, Ditirego le Dithulaganyo (DoH, 2015) le dikaedi tse dingwe tsa boditšhabatšhaba tsa seetiki tse

dingwe tse di maleba mo thutong e. Gongwe go ka tlhokega gore maloko a komiti ya dietiki tsa patlisiso kgotsa batho ba bangwe ba ba lebaneng go tla go tlhatlhoba direkoto tsa patlisiso.

### **Thuto e ya patlisiso e e ka ga eng?**

- *Patlisiso e e diriswa go lekeletsa gore a "Rhythm of Life" e na le kutlwalo mo baneng ba ba leng batsayakarolo mo lenaneng. Babatlisisi ba batla go ithuta bononofo jwa lenane la go tokafatsa maphelo a bašwa le mokgwa wa go phela ga bone morago ga go fetsa lenane. Fa re ka itse gore lenane le a dira, re ka e tokafaletsa bašwa ba bangwe ba ba le tsenang mo bokamosong.*
- *Ithuto e e tla direlwa kwa Diofising tsa Dintlha tsa Ditirelo kwa Tswaing, Ratlou le Ramotshere Moiloa.*
- *Babatlisisi ga ba karolo ya sepe ya DSD ka mokgwa ope mme re ipusa gotlhelele kwa ntle ga bone.*
- *Re na le leano la go ithuta le go tshwara therisano le bana ba le 30 ba ba thulaneng le molao ba ba mo gare ga dilemo di le 14-17.*

Goreng wena o kopilwe gore o tseye karolo mo patlisisong?

- *O laleditswe go nna karolo ya patlisiso e ka gonne o le mongwe yo o boneng lenane le le bidiwang "Victim-offender mediation programme" (V.O.M.) mme o rometswe ke kgotla go tsena manane. Ke bana fela ba ba dirileng tshenyo le ba ba rometsweng ke kgotla ba ba tla tsenngwang.*
- *Gape wena o magareng a dilemo di le 14 - 17 mme o wa tikologo e.*

Go tla batliwa eng mo go wena?

- *Mo patlisisong o tla solofelwa gore o tlatse dipotsopatlisiso gabedi mo nakong ya go amogela ditirelo go tswa go DSD: 1) Mo tshimologong ya lenane; 2) mo bokhutlong jwa lenane.*
- *Gape re go tlhoka gore o re fe tumelelo go ntsha tshedimose tso nngwe go tswa mo faeleng ya gago ya kgetsi e e tshwarwang ke modirediloago wa gago kwa ntlheng ya tirelo. Re ka ntsha tshedimose tso ka kelotlhoko mme re e boloke mo khomphiutareng kwa ntle ga go dirisa leina la gago. Re tla fa tshedimose tso ya gago khoutu gore go se nne le ope yo a kgonang go lemoga gore ke wena gope.*

A o tla amogela sengwe go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong e?

- *O ka se bone tuelo go tswa mo go tseyeng karolo mo patlisisong mme ga re bone gore o ka itemogela mathata ape go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong.*

A go na le ditekeletso ka go tsaya karolo ga gago mo patlisisong e mme go ka diriswa eng go di thibeleda?

- *O ka ikutlwela go se ikutlwe monate fa o tlatse dipotsolotso. Fa o ka ikutlwa o se monate o ka itsisa ka ga maikutlo a go babatlisisi mme ba ka rulaganya kopano le modirediloago wa gago fa o ka rata jalo kwa ntlheng ya tirelo gore o buisana maikutlo a gago le ene.*

Re ka sireletsa jang bokhupamarama jwa gago mme ke mang a tla kgonang go bona diphithelelo tsa gago?

- *Re ka se tsenye leina la gago gope mo ditokomaneng tsa rona go tlhamamisa gore ga o itsiwe ke ope. Bonosi jwa gago bo tla tlotliwa ke mmatlisisi le mongwe le mongwe yo o tsayang karolo mo ithutong. Re ka se fetise tshedimose tso ya gago kampo e nngwe le e nngwe e o re e fang le motho ope kwa ntle. Babatlisisi ba tla tlhama pego ya patlisiso e e tla romelwang kwa DSD. Ga go sepe se se leng teng mo teng ga pego se se ka dirang gore go lemogwe gore motsayakarolo ke mang. Diphithelelo tsa dikhopi tsa dipampiri di tla bolokwa mme di tla lotlelelwa mo dikobotlong mo ofising ya mmatlisisi mme data ya seileketeroniki e tla bolokwa mo khomphiuthareng ka lefoko la senotlolo.*

Go tla diriwa eng ka diphithlelelo kampo disampole tse di amogetsweng?

- *Diphithlelelo tsa thuto e di tla dirisiwa fela mo thutong e.*

O ka itse jang ka diphetho tsa patlisiso e?

- *Re tla go fa diphetho tsa patlisiso e ka nako ya bokhutlo jwa kgwedi ya Lwetse 2018.*
- *O tla fiwa dipego di le pedi tse di khutshwane morago ga gore patlisiso e fetswe. Dipego tse pedi tse di tla go fiwa ke modirediloago wa gago di le mo teng ga enfelopo e e tswetsweng.*

A o tliile go duelwa go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong mme a o ka na le ditshenyegelo?

*Ithuto e ga se e e emilweng nokeng ka ditšhelete.*

*Ga o ketla o duelwa sepe go tsaya karolo mo patlisisong.*

*Go ka se nne le ditshenyegelo dipe mo go wena fa o tsaya karolo mo ithutong.*

A go na le sengwe gape se o tlhokang go se itse le go se dira?

- O ka ikgolaganya le Tshepiso Motshedi kwa 0834046315 fa o ka na le dipotso dingwe go feta kgotsa o na le mathata mangwe.
- Gape o ka ikopantsha le Komiti ya Dietiki tsa Patlisiso ya Pholo kwa go Moh Carolien van Zyl kwa go 018 299 1206 kampo ka eposo kwa go carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za fa e le gore o na le dingongorego kampo mabaka a a sa arabiwang sentle ka patlisiso.
- O tliile go amogela sekaelo sa foromo eno ya tumelelo gore o e ipolokele yone.

## **Polelo ya Motsayakarolo**

**Ka go saena tokomane e, nna ..... ke dumela go tsaya karolo mo ithutong ya patlisiso e e bidiwang: Kutlwalo ya Lenane la Phaposo mo maitshwarong a tumelelo ya bogodu mo baneng ba ba thulanang le molao.**

Ke dira boipolelo gore:

- Ke buisitse tshedimosetso e / e ntlhaloseditswe ke motho yo o tshepagalang ka puo e ke e itseng sentle e ke siameng ka yone.
- Patlisiso e ntlhaloseditswe sentle.
- Ke nnile le tshono ya go ka botsa dipotso batho ba babedi, e bong motho wa go tlatsa foromo ya tumelelo le nna le gape mo mmatlising mme dipotso tsa me tsotlhe di ile tsa arajwa.
- Ke tlhologanya gape gore thuto e ke ya go ithaopa mme ga ke a gatelelwa gope go tsaya karolo.
- Ke ka tlhopha go tlogela thuto nako e nngwe le e nngwe mme ga ke ketla ke tsholwa ka mokgwa o o sa siamang fa ke dira jalo.
- Ke ka kopiwa gore ke tswe mo thutong pele e fetswa fa e le gore mmatlisisi o ikutlwa gore se go ntshiametse kampo fa ke sa latele leano la thuto jaaka go latela se ke se dumeletseng.

E saenilwe kwa [lefelu] ..... ka (letlha)  
..... 20.....

.....  
**Mosaeno wa motsayakarolo**

.....  
**Mosaeno wa Mosupi**

**Polelo ya Motho yo go Dirwang Tumelelo mo go Ene**

Nna (leina) ..... ke bolelela gore:

- Ke tlhalositse sentle le ka nepagalo tshedimose tso ya tokomane e go motsayakarolo: .....
- .....
- Ke dirisitse / ga ke a dirisa mofetoledi.
- Ke mo tlhotlheleditse go botsa dipotso mme ke tsere nako go di araba.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore ene o tlhaloganya dintlha tsotlhe tsa mabaka a patlisiso jaaka go tlhaloseditswe fa godimo
- Ke mo file le nako go se buisana le ba bangwe fa a ne a ka rata go dira jalo.

E saenilwe kwa [lefelu] ..... ka (letlha)  
..... 20.....

.....  
**Mosaeno wa Motho yo go Dirwang Tumelelo mo go Ene**

.....  
**Mosaeno wa Mosupi**

**Polelo ya Mmatlisisi**

Nna (leina) ..... ke bolelela gore:

- Ke tlhalositse tshedimose tso ya tokomane e go motsayakarolo  
..... Kgotsa, Ke katisitse  
..... gore a e ntlhalosetse motsayakarolo.
- Ke dirisitse / ga ke a dirisa mofetoledi.
- Ke mo tlhotlheleditse go botsa dipotso mme ke tsere nako go di araba.  
kgotsa ke ne ke le teng fa a ne a ka rata go botsa dipotso dingwe.
- Foromo ya tumelelo e amogetswe ke motho yo o ipusang.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore ene o tlhaloganya ka go lekana mabaka otlhe a patlisiso jaaka go tlhaloseditswe mo godimo.
- Ke kgotsofetse gore ene o nnile le nako go buisana foromo le ba bangwe fa a ne a rata go ka dira jalo.

E saenilwe kwa [lefelō] ..... ka (letlha)  
.....20.....

.....  
**Mosaeno wa Mmatlisisi**

.....  
**Mosaeno wa Mosupi**



### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PARENTS

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: THE IMPACT OF A DIVERSION PROGRAMME ON THE PRO-CRIMINAL ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW.**

**ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS:**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof W Roestenburg**

**POST GRADUATE STUDENT: TSHEPISO SINAH MOTSHEDI**

**ADDRESS: 61 General Delarey street, Delareyville, 2770**

**CONTACT NUMBER: 0834046315**

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my PhD research. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and what is asked from you. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00019-18-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

#### **What is this research study all about?**

- *This research is done to test if the “Rhythm of Life” makes an impact on your child as a participant in the programme. The researcher want to study the effectiveness of the programme in improving young people’s way of life after completing the programme. This they do so that they can improve the programme for other young people who attend it in future.*

- *This study will be conducted at Tswaing, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa Service Points offices.*
- *We plan to interview 30 children in conflict with the law who are 14-17 years of age about the impact of Diversion programme in the North West Province*

**Why will your child be invited?**

- *Your child will be invited to participate because he/she is between the ages of 14-17 years, is scheduled to participate in the “Rhythm of Life” skills training programme, and thereby fulfils the requirements of our study*

What will be expected of your child?

- *Your child will be expected to do the following:*
  - Give us permission to use certain information about his/her sessions with the social worker that we need to get from his/her file at DSD
  - Fill in a questionnaire three times: at start of the programme, after completing the programme, and three months later. Each questionnaire takes about 25 minutes to complete
  - Participate in an interview with the researcher that takes about 60 minutes

Will your child gain anything from taking part in this research?

- *Your child will gain from participating in the programme.*
- *He/she will not gain directly from filling the questionnaire.*
- *He/she will gain new insights from both the questionnaire and the interview with the researcher, about his own position towards offending.*

Are there risks involved for your child taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- *The programme sessions may include emotional content which will be handled by the facilitator. In case of the medical emergency, the Probation Officer will take the child to the local clinic or hospital. Children may get tired during the session and breaks will be given between the sessions.*
- *There are more gains for your child in joining this study than there are risks.*

How will we protect confidentiality and who will see the findings?

- *Any information we collect from your child will be coded to make it anonymous. Only the researcher will be able to put names to the codes, but this will not be done for ethical reasons.*
- *Anonymity of any findings will be protected by the researcher and research committee and your child’s identity is confidential. Your child’s privacy will be respected by the researcher and everyone who is involved in the study. Any results will be kept confidential by the researcher. Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher’s office and for electronic data it will be password protected. Data will be stored for 5 years.*
- *Should your child reveal any information to us that, in our professional opinion, we should report to anybody in the interest of your child, or information that may assist your child in any way, we are compelled by law to report this to the child’s social worker, who will deal with this information in a professional appropriate manner*

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- *The findings of this study will only be used for this study and not for any future study in South Africa or overseas.*

How will you know about the results of this research?

- We will give your child the results of this research by means of two short reports, when the researcher is done with data analysis by the end of September 2018.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

No, you will not be paid to take part in the study because this study is not funded. There will be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Tshepiso Motshedi at 0834046315 if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or [carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

### Declaration by parent

**By signing below, I ..... give permission to the researcher in the research study titled: *The Impact a Diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law*, to approach my child,..... to participate in this research.**

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that should my child decide to take part in this study, this is **voluntary** and that he/she has not been pressurised to take part.
- He/she may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if he/she does so.
- He/she may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest of the child, or if he/she does not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by person obtaining consent**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to  
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of person obtaining consent**  
**Declaration by researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ..... **Or** I had it explained by ..... who I trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them  
Or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**



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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>



**PARENTAL PERMISSION DOCUMENTATION FOR PARENTS (VICTIM-OFFENDER  
MEDIATION (V.O.M), COMPARISON GROUP)**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: THE IMPACT OF A DIVERSION PROGRAMME ON THE  
PRO-CRIMINAL ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW.**

**ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: (NWU-00019-18-S1)**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof W Roestenburg**

**POST GRADUATE STUDENT: TSHEPISO SINAH MOTSHEDI**

**ADDRESS: 61 General Delarey street, Delareyville, 2770**

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You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my PhD research. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and what is asked from you. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00019-18-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

### **What is this research study all about?**

- *This research is done to test if the “Rhythm of Life” makes an impact on children as participants in this programme. The researcher want to study the effectiveness of the programme in improving young people’s way of life after completing the programme. This they do so that they can improve the programme for other young people who attend it in future.*
- *This study will be conducted at Tswaing, Ratlou and Ramotshere Moiloa Service Points offices.*
- *We plan to interview 30 children in conflict with the law who are 14-17 years of age about the impact of Diversion programme in the North West Province*

### **Why will your child be invited?**

- *Your child will be invited to participate because he/she is between the ages of 14-17 years, is scheduled to participate in the “Victim-Offender Mediation” programme, and thereby fulfils the requirements of our study to participate in the control group of the above study.*

### **What will be expected of your child?**

- *Your child will be expected to do the following:*
  - *Give us permission to administer a questionnaire at two different occasions during the following six months: The start of the programme and at the end of the programme. Each questionnaire takes about 25 minutes to complete.*

### **Will your child gain anything from taking part in this research?**

- *He/she will not gain directly from filling the questionnaire.*

### **Are there risks involved for your child taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?**

- *The risks to completing the questionnaire are minimal. The child may feel uneasy whilst completing the questionnaire. Any such feelings can be discussed upon his next session with the social worker at the service point.*

### **How will we protect confidentiality and who will see the findings?**

- *Any information we collect from your child, will be coded to make it anonymous. Only the researcher will be able to put names to the codes, but this will not be done for ethical reasons.*
- *Anonymity of any findings will be protected by the researcher and research committee and your child’s identity is confidential. Your child’s privacy will be respected by the researcher and everyone who is involved in the study. Any results will be kept confidential by the researcher. Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher’s office and for electronic data it will be password protected. Data will be stored for 5 years.*
- *Should your child reveal any information to us that, in our professional opinion, we should report to anybody in the interest of your child, or information that may assist your child in any way, we are compelled by law to report this to the child’s social worker, who will deal with this information in a professional appropriate manner*

### **What will happen with the findings or samples?**

- *The findings of this study will only be used for this study and not for any future study in South Africa or overseas.*

### **How will you know about the results of this research?**

- We will give your child the results of this research by means of two short reports, when the researcher is done with data analysis by the end of September 2018.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

No, you will not be paid to take part in the study because this study is not funded. There will be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Tshepiso Motshedi at 0834046315 if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or [carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za](mailto:carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za) if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

### Declaration by parent

**By signing below, I ..... give permission to the researcher in the research study titled: *The Impact a Diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law*, to approach my child,..... to participate in this research.**

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that should my child decide to take part in this study, this is **voluntary** and that he/she has not been pressurised to take part.
- He/she may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if he/she does so.
- He/she may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest of the child, or if he/she does not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of participant**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by person obtaining consent**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to  
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of person obtaining consent**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

**Declaration by researcher**

I (*name*) ..... declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to ..... **Or** I had it explained by ..... who I trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them  
Or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) ..... on (*date*) ..... 20....

.....  
**Signature of researcher**

.....  
**Signature of witness**

## **ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONNAIRES**

### **FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Specific questions asked for the focus group qualitative interview were as follows:

- 1. What practices in the manual/sessions can be described as “best” according to your experiences with the programme manual?*
- 2. What practices in the manual/sessions are less effective according to your experience?*
- 3. What alternative practices, media or processes would be advisable to make delivery of the programme more effective?*

These questions reflected delivery mechanism questions. An overall “change logic” reflection should furthermore be explored consistent with programme evaluation theory. Generalized reflection questions will be:

- 1. Tell us your thoughts about what programme components causes participants to change through this programme?*
- 2. What, in your opinion contributes to change or lack of change in the programme?*
- 3. What should be done to enhance the change capacity of the programme*

## Casefile data collection sheet

Present the signed informed consent form for each participant to the relevant social worker. The following data elements are to be captured from the participant's casefile. The researcher will study the casefile and record for each participant the following information

Participant code number:

### Child's details

1. Age:
2. Gender: Male  Female
3. School grade at time of offence:  
Grade 1 – 4   
Grade 5 – 7   
Grade 8 – 10   
Grade 11 - 12
4. Is child still at school at present? Yes  No
5. Village/extension/area of residence:
6. Type of offence:
7. Number of previous offences

### Family factors:

8. Where does the child live at present?  
With own parent/parents   
With a relative   
On the street   
In an institution (CYCC, residence, hostel)   
Other
9. Who is the child's primary caregiver *at present?* (Choose one)  
Both parents   
Predominantly mother   
Predominantly father   
Foster parent/s   
Grandparent/s

Demographic questionnaire for casefile information – Tshepiso Motshedi *The impact of a diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law.*

Sibling/s

Another person not directly related to child

Self-care

10. Size of family (household) where child presently resides: *(Record count)*

11. Is the breadwinner in the household currently employed? Yes  No

12. Does the child currently present with behaviour problems? Yes  No

13. Number of visits/consultations with social worker? *(Record count)*

End of questions

Demographic questionnaire for casefile information – Tshepiso Motshedi *The impact of a diversion programme on the Pro-Criminal Attitudes of children in conflict with the law.*

## Pre-Test Questionnaire

### Section A: Demographic details

Grouping variable

Case nr:

### Section A: Demographic details

Grouping variable:

Experimental group	1
Comparison group	2

### Participant details:

1. Age

10-12 years	1
13-15	2
16-18	3

2. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

3. Which Service Point are you in?

Tswaing	1
Ratlou	2
Ramotshere	3

4. Level of Schooling completed

Not schooling	1
Grade 5-7	2
Grade 8-10	3
Grade 11-12	4

5. Have you ever committed an offence?

No	1
Only once	2
More than once	3

6. Type of offence committed

	Current offence		Previous offence	
	Exp Group	Comp G	Exp Group	Comp Group
1. Rape			1	
2. House breaking			2	
3. Assault			3	
4. Theft			4	
5. Shoplifting			5	
6. Robbery			6	

Sexual assault (of a minor)	7	7
Illegal possession of drugs	8	8
Malicious damage to property	9	9
Grievous bodily harm	10	
Illegal possession of fire arm	11	
Illegal possession of fire arm	12	
Hijacking	13	
Robbery with aggravating	14	
Attempted rape	15	

### 7. Language

Tswana	1
English	2
Afrikaans	3

### 8. Who takes care of you? Please choose one option

Both biological parents	1
Mother	2
Father	3
Foster Parent	4
Grandparent or both grandparents	5
My brother(s) and/sister(s)	6
Children's home/ institution	7
Nobody, I take care of myself	8
People at shelter	9
Maternal Family	10
Paternal Family	11

## Section B: Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles

Directions: The following items, if answered honestly, are designed to help you better understand your thinking and behavior. Please take the time to complete each of the 80 items on this inventory using the four-point scale defined below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1. I will allow nothing to get in the way of me getting what I want	4	3	2	1
2. I find myself blaming society and external circumstances for the problems I have had in life	4	3	2	1
3. Change can be scary	4	3	2	1
4. Even though I may start out with the best of intentions I have trouble remaining focused and staying "on track"	4	3	2	1
5. There is nothing I can't do if I try hard enough	4	3	2	1

6. When pressured by life's problems I have said "the hell with it" and followed this up by using drugs or engaging in crime	4	3	2	1
7. It's unsettling not knowing what the future holds	4	3	2	1
8. I have found myself blaming the victims of some of my crimes by saying things like they deserved what they got or they should have known better	4	3	2	1
9. One of the first things I consider in sizing up another person is whether they look strong or weak	4	3	2	1
10. I occasionally think of things too horrible to talk about	4	3	2	1
11. I am afraid of losing my mind	4	3	2	1
12. The way I look at it, I've paid my dues and am therefore justified in taking what I want	4	3	2	1
13. The more I got away with crime the more I thought there was no way the police or authorities would ever catch up with me	4	3	2	1
14. I believe that breaking the law is no big deal as long as you don't physically hurt someone	4	3	2	1
15. I have helped out friends and family with money acquired illegally	4	3	2	1
16. I am uncritical of my thoughts and ideas to the point that I ignore the problems and difficulties associated with these plans until it is too late	4	3	2	1
17. It is unfair that I have been imprisoned for my crimes when bank presidents, lawyer, and politicians get away with all sorts of illegal and unethical behavior every day	4	3	2	1
18. I find myself arguing with others over relatively trivial matters	4	3	2	1
19. I can honestly say that the welfare of my victims was something I took into account when I committed my crimes	4	3	2	1
20. When frustrated I find myself saying "fuck it" and then engaging in some irresponsible or irrational act	4	3	2	1
21. New challenges and situations make me nervous	4	3	2	1
22. Even when I got caught for crime I would convince myself that there was no way they would convict me or send me to prison	4	3	2	1
23. I find myself taking shortcuts, even if I know these shortcuts will interfere with my ability to achieve certain long-term goals	4	3	2	1
24. When not in control of a situation I feel weak and helpless and experience a desire to exert power over others	4	3	2	1
25. Despite the criminal life I have led, deep down I am basically a good person	4	3	2	1
26. I will frequently start an activity, project, or job but then never finish	4	3	2	1
27. I regularly hear voices and see visions which others do not hear or see	4	3	2	1
28. When it's all said and done, society owes me	4	3	2	1

29.I have said to myself more than once if it wasn't for someone "snitching" on me I would have never gotten caught	4	3	2	1
30.I tend to let things go which should probably be attended to, based on my belief that they will work themselves out	4	3	2	1
31.I have used alcohol or drugs to eliminate fear or apprehension before committing a crime	4	3	2	1
32.I have made mistakes in life	4	3	2	1
33.On the stress I would tell myself I needed to rob or steal in order to continue living the life I had coming	4	3	2	1
34.I like to be on center stage in my relationship and conversations with others, controlling things as much as possible	4	3	2	1
35.When questioned about my motives for engaging in crime, I have justified my behavior by pointing out how hard my life has been	4	3	2	1
36.I have trouble following through on good initial intentions	4	3	2	1
37.I find myself expressing tender feelings toward animals or little children in order to make myself feel better after committing a crime or engaging in irresponsible behavior	4	3	2	1
38.There have been times in my life when I felt I was above the law	4	3	2	1
39.It seems that I have trouble concentrating on the simplest of tasks	4	3	2	1
40.I tend to act impulsively under stress	4	3	2	1
41.Why should I be made to appear worthless in front of friends and family when it is so easy to take from others	4	3	2	1
42.I have often not tried something out of fear that I might fail	4	3	2	1
43.I tend to put off until tomorrow what should have been done today	4	3	2	1
44.Although I have always realized that I might get caught for a crime, I would tell myself that there was "no way they would catch me <u>this time</u> " .....	4	3	2	1
45.I have justified selling drugs, burglarizing homes, or robbing banks by telling myself that if I didn't do it someone else would	4	3	2	1
46.I find it difficult to commit myself to something I am not sure of because of fear	4	3	2	1
47.People have difficulty understanding me because I tend to jump around from subject to subject when talking	4	3	2	1
48.There is nothing more frightening than change	4	3	2	1
49.Nobody tells me what to do and if they try I will respond with intimidation, threats, or I might even get physically aggressive	4	3	2	1
50.When I commit a crime or act irresponsibly I will perform a "good deed" or do something nice for someone as a way of making up for the harm I have caused	4	3	2	1

51.I have difficulty critically evaluating my thoughts, ideas, and plans	4	3	2	1
52.Nobody before or after can do it better than me because I am stronger, smarter, or slicker than most people	4	3	2	1
53.I have rationalized my irresponsible actions with such statements as “everybody else is doing it so why shouldn’t I”	4	3	2	1
54.If challenged I will sometimes go along by saying “yeah, you’re right,” even when I know the other person is wrong ,because it’s easier than arguing with them about it	4	3	2	1
55.Fear of change has made it difficult for me to be successful in life	4	3	2	1
56.The way I look it I’m not really a criminal because I never intended to hurt anyone	4	3	2	1
57.I still find myself saying “the hell with working a regular job, I’ll just take it	4	3	2	1
58.I sometimes wish I could take back certain things I have said or done	4	3	2	1
59.Looking back over my life I can see now that I lacked direction and consistency of purpose	4	3	2	1
60.Strange odors, for which there is no explanation, come to me for no apparent reason	4	3	2	1
61.When on the stress I believed I could use drugs and avoid the negative consequences (addiction, compulsive use) that I observed in others	4	3	2	1
62.I tend to be rather easily sidetracked so that I rarely finish what I start	4	3	2	1
63.If there is a short-cut or easy way around something I will find it	4	3	2	1
64.I have trouble controlling my angry feelings	4	3	2	1
65.I believe that I am a special person and that my situation deserves special consideration	4	3	2	1
66.There is nothing worse than being seen as weak or helpless	4	3	2	1
67.I view the positive things I have done for others as making up for the negative things	4	3	2	1
68.Even when I set goals I frequently do not obtain them because I am doing so because of fear	4	3	2	1
69.There have been times when I tried to change but was prevented from doing so because of fear	4	3	2	1
70.When frustrated I will throw rational thought to the wind with such statements as “fuck it” or “the hell with it”	4	3	2	1
71.I have told myself that I would never have had to engage in crime if I had a good job	4	3	2	1
72.I can see that my life would be more satisfying if I could learn to make better decisions	4	3	2	1

73. There have been times when I have felt entitled to break the law in order to pay for vacation, new car, or expensive clothing that I told myself I needed	4	3	2	1
74. I rarely considered the consequences of my action when I was in the community	4	3	2	1
75. A significant portion of my life on streets was spent trying to control people and situations	4	3	2	1
76. When I first began breaking the law I was very cautious, but as time went by and I didn't get caught I became overconfident convinced myself that I could do just about anything and get away with it	4	3	2	1
77. As I look back on it now, I was a pretty good guy even though I was involved in crime	4	3	2	1
78. There have been times when I have made plans to do something with my family and then cancelled these plans so that I could hang out with my friends, use drugs, commit crimes	4	3	2	1
79. I tend to push problems to the side rather than dealing with them	4	3	2	1
80. I have used good behavior (abstaining from crime for a period of time) or various situations (fight with a spouse) to give myself permission to commit a crime or engage in other irresponsible activities such as using drugs	4	3	2	1

**Section C: Peer deviancy scale**

These items measure youth reports of friends' involvement in delinquent activity. Students are asked how many friends they would consider to be close friends. They are then presented with 10 problem behaviors and asked how many of their friends have done these behaviors in the past 3 months.

How many friends would you consider to be close friends? These are friends who you see more than once a week. These are friends who you spend time with and enjoy doing things with.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Record number of friends)

Now, in the last 3 months, how many of these friends have ...

	none of them	very few of them	some of them	most of them	all of them
1. Skipped school without an excuse?	0	1	2	3	4

2. Stolen something worth less than R100?	0	1	2	3	4
3. Gone into or tried to go into a building to steal something?	0	1	2	3	4
4. Gone joyriding that is, taken a motor vehicle such as a car or Motor cycle for a ride or drive without the owner permission?	0	1	2	3	4
5. Hit someone with the idea of really hurting that person?	0	1	2	3	4
6. Attacked someone with a weapon or other thing to really hurt that person?	0	1	2	3	4
7. Use a weapon, force, or strong arm methods to get money or things from people?	0	1	2	3	4
8. Drank alcohol?	0	1	2	3	4
9. Been in a gang fight?	0	1	2	3	4
10. Hit or slapped a boyfriend/girlfriend?	0	1	2	3	4

## Post-Test Questionnaire

Case nr:

### Section B: Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles

Directions: The following items, if answered honestly, are designed to help you better understand your thinking and behavior. Please take the time to complete each of the 80 items on this inventory using the four-point scale defined below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1. I will allow nothing to get in the way of me getting what I want	4	3	2	1
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3. Change can be scary	4	3	2	1
4. Even though I may start out with the best of intentions I have trouble remaining focused and staying "on track"	4	3	2	1
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6. When pressured by life's problems I have said "the hell with it" and followed this up by using drugs or engaging in crime	4	3	2	1
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consequences (addiction, compulsive use) that I observed in others				
62.I tend to be rather easily sidetracked so that I rarely finish what I start	4	3	2	1
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72.I can see that my life would be more satisfying if I could learn to make better decisions	4	3	2	1
73.There have been times when I have felt entitled to break the law in order to pay for vacation, new car, or expensive clothing that I told myself I needed	4	3	2	1
74.I rarely considered the consequences of my action when I was in the community	4	3	2	1
75.A significant portion of my life on streets was spent trying to control people and situations	4	3	2	1
76.When I first began breaking the law I was very cautious, but as time went by and I didn't get caught I became overconfident convinced myself that I could do just about anything and get away with it	4	3	2	1

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78.There have been times when I have made plans to do something with my family and then cancelled these plans so that I could hang out with my friends , use drugs, commit crimes	4	3	2	1
79.I tend to push problems to the side rather than dealing with them	4	3	2	1
80.I have used good behavior (abstaining from crime for a period of time) or various situations(fight with a spouse) to give myself permission to commit a crime or engage in other irresponsible activities such as using drugs	4	3	2	1

### Section C: Peer deviancy scale

These items measure youth reports of friends' involvement in delinquent activity. Students are asked how many friends they would consider to be close friends. They are then presented with 10 problem behaviors and asked how many of their friends have done these behaviors in the past 3 months.

How many friends would you consider to be close friends? These are friends who you see more than once a week. These are friends who you spend time with and enjoy doing things with.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Record number of friends)

Now, in the last 3 months, how many of these friends have ...

	none of them	very few of them	some of them	most of them	all of them
1. Skipped school without an excuse?	0	1	2	3	4
2. Stolen something worth less than R100?	0	1	2	3	4
3. Gone into or tried to go into a building to steal something?	0	1	2	3	4
4. Gone joyriding that is, taken a motor vehicle such as a car or Motor cycle for a ride or drive without the owner permission?	0	1	2	3	4
5. Hit someone with the idea of really hurting that person?	0	1	2	3	4
6. Attacked someone with a weapon or other thing to really hurt that person?	0	1	2	3	4
7. Use a weapon, force, or strong arm methods to get money or things from people?	0	1	2	3	4
8. Drank alcohol?	0	1	2	3	4
9. Been in a gang fight?	0	1	2	3	4
10. Hit or slapped a boyfriend/girlfriend?	0	1	2	3	4

## Section D: Service Perceptions Index (SP)

(This section is completed only during Post-Test)

This index consists of items derived from Question 45 in the questionnaire. The dimension specifically asks questions regarding the court process during the initial phase of intervention. Please circle the correct answer. Make sure that you use the following five point Likert scale:

### Scaling format

Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Neither                      Agree                      Strongly Agree  
 ①    • ②    • ③    • ④    • ⑤

Q45.1 I regard the people who worked with me as helpful	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.2 I had the opportunity to tell a probation officer everything I wanted about the offence	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.3 The information that was provided to me helped me choosing the right type of service	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.4 When the court case was concluded I knew exactly what was being expected of me	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.5 I am satisfied with the help I received from the social worker/probation officer during my court case	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.6 During the whole process I felt that people wanted to help me	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.7 The recommendations made by the probation officer about myself were clearly communicated to me	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.8 I am satisfied that the court's decision about me was appropriate for my offence	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.9 I understood clearly what happened during my court appearances	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.10 I understood the questions that I was asked during investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Q45.11 I am satisfied with the way the legal process was conducted	1	2	3	4	5

The following single question was asked for experimental and comparison group qualitative interview:

*"Right now, do you think (perceive) the programme did anything for you?"*



## ANNEXURE E: DECLARATION LANGUAGE EDITOR



27 April 2020

I, **Ms Cecilia van der Walt**, hereby declare that I took care of the editing of the thesis of Ms Tshepiso Motshedi titled *The impact of a diversion programme on the pro-criminal attitudes of youth in conflict with the law*.

**MS CECILIA VAN DER WALT**

BA (*Cum Laude*)

THED (*Cum Laude*),

Plus Language editing and translation at Honours level (*Cum Laude*),

Plus Accreditation with SATI for Afrikaans and translation

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